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SICILY AND MALTA.

L E T T E R L

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DEAR BECKFORD, Naples, May 14, 1770.

the more real terror

1 REMEMBER to have heard you regret, that in all your peregrinations thro' Europe, you had ever neglected the island of Sicily; and had spent much of your time in running over the old beaten track, and in examining the thread-bare subjects of Italy and France; when probably there were a variety of objects, not less interesting, that still lay buried in oblivion in that celebrated island. We intend to profit from this hint of yours. Fullarton has been urging me to it with all that ardour, which a new prospect of acquiring knowledge ever inspires in him; and Glover, your old acquaintance, has promifed to accompany us.

The Italians represent it as impossible: as there are no inns in the island, and many of the roads are VOL. F.

over dangerous precipices, or through bogs and forests, intested by the most resolute and daring banditti in Europe. However, all these considerations, formidable as they may appear, did not deter Mr. Hamilton*, his lady, and Lord Fortroset. They made this expedition last fummer; and returned so much delighted with it, that they have animated us with the strongest defire of enjoying the same plea-

Our first plan, was to go by land to Regium, and from thence, cross over to Messina; but on making exact enquiry, with regard to the flate of the country, and method of travelling, we find that the danger from the banditti in Calabria and Apulia is fo great, the accommodations fo wretched, and inconveniencies of every kind fo numerous, without any confideration whatever to throw into the oppofite scale, that we soon relinquished that scheme; and in spite of all the terrors of Scylla and Charybdis, and the more real terrors of fea-fickness (the most formidable monster of the three) we have determined to go by water: And that no time may be loft, we have already taken our passage on board an English ship, which is ready to fail with the first fair wind.

Now as this little expedition has never been confidered as any part of the grand tour; and as it will probably present many objects worthy of your attention, not mentioned in any of our books of travels; I flatter myself that a short account of these will not be unacceptable to you; and may in some degree make up for your having neglected to vifit them. You may therefore expect to hear of me, from every town where we stop; and when I meet with any thing deferving of notice, I shall attempt to describe it in as few words as possible. We have been wait-

^{*} Now Knight of the Bath; + Now Earl of Seaforth.

ing with impatience for a fair wind, but at present there is little prospect of it. The weather is exceedingly rough, and not a ship has been able to get out of the harbour for upwards of three weeks past. This climate is by no means what we expected to find it; and the serene sky of Italy, so much boasted of by our travelled gentlemen, does not altogether deserve the great eulogiums bestowed upon it. It is now the middle of May, and we have not as yet had any continuance of what may be called fine weather. It has, indeed, been abundantly warm, but seldom a day has passed without sudden storms of wind and rain, which render walking out here to the full as dangerous to our invalids, as it is in

England.

I am persuaded that our physicians are under some mistake with regard to this climate: It is certainly one of the warmest in Italy, but it is as certainly one of the most inconstant; and from what we have observed, disagrees with the greatest part of our valetudinarians; but more particularly with the gouty people, who have all found themselves better at Rome; which though much colder in winter, is, I believe, a healthier climate. Naples to be fure is most eligible in summer, as the air is constantly refreshed by the sea-breeze, when Rome is often scorched by the most insupportable heat. Last summer, Farenheit's thermometer never rose higher at Naples than 76. At Rome it was at 89. The difference is often still more considerable. In winter it is not less remarkable. Here our greatest degree of cold was in the end of January; the thermometer stood at 36; at Rome it fell to 27; so that the distance between the two extremes of heat and cold last year at Naples, was only 40 degrees; whereas at Rome it was no less than 62. Yet, by all accounts, their winter was much more agreeable and healthy than ours: For they had clear frosty weather, whilst we

were deluged with rains, accompanied with very high wind. The people here affure us, that in some feafons it has rained every day for fix or feven weeks. But the most disagreeable part of the Neapolitan. climate is the firocc or fouth-east wind, which is very common at this feafon. It is infinitely more relaxing, and gives the vapours in a much higher degree, than the worst of our rainy Novembers. It has now blown for these seven days without intermillion; and has indeed blown away all our gaiety and spirits; and if it continues much longer, I do not know what may be the consequence. It gives a degree of fassitude, both to the body and mind, that renders them absolutely incapable of performing their usual functions. It is not perhaps surprizing; that it should produce these effects on a phlegmatic English constitution; but we have just now an instance, that all the mercury of France must fink under the load of this horrid, leaden atmosphere. A fmart Parifian marquis came here about ten days ago: he was fo full of animal fpirits that the people thought him mad. He never remained a moment in the same place; but, at their grave conversations, used to skip from room to room with such amazing elasticity, that the Italians swore he had got springs in his shoes. I met him this morning, walking with the step of a philosopher; a smelling bottle in his hand, and all his vivacity extinguished. I asked what was the matter? " Ah! mon ami," faid he, " je m'ennui à la mort;-moi, qui n'ai jamais scu "l'ennui. Mais cet execrable vent m'accable; et " deux jours de plus, et je me pend."

The natives themselves do not suffer less than strangers: and all nature seems to languish during this abominable wind. A Neapolitan lover avoids his mistress with the utmost care in the time of the sirocc, and the indolence it inspires, is almost sufficient to extinguish every passion. All works of

genius

genius are laid aside, during its continuance; and when any thing very flat or insipid is produced, the strongest phrase of disapprobation they can bestow is, "Era scritto in tempo del sirocco;" that it was writ in the time of the sirocc. I shall make no other apology for this letter; and whenever I happen to tire you, be kind enough to remember (pray do) that it is not me you are to blame, but the sirocc wind. This will put me much at my ease, and save us a world of time in apologies.

I have been endeavouring to get some account of the cause of this very singular quality of the sirocc; but the people here seldom think of accounting for any thing, and I do not find, notwithstanding its remarkable effects, that it has ever yet been an ob-

ject of enquiry amongst them.

I have not observed that the firoce makes any remarkable change in the barometer. When it first set in, the mercury fell about a line and a half; and has continued much about the same height ever fince; but the thermometer was at 43 the morning it began, and rose almost immediately to 65; and for these two days past it has been at 70 and 71. However, it is certainly not the warmth of this wind, that renders it so oppressive to the spirits; it is rather the want of that genial quality which is fo enlivening; and which ever renders the western breeze fo agreeable; the fpring and elasticity of the air feems to be loft; and that active principle which animates all nature, appears to be dead. This principle we have fometimes supposed to be nothing else than the subtle electric fluid that the air usually contains; and indeed, we have found, that during this wind, it appears to be almost annihilated, or at least, its activity exceedingly reduced. Yesterday, and to-day, we have been attempting to make fome electrical experiments; but I never before found the air so unfavourable for them.

Sea bathing we have found to be the best antidote against the effects of the firocc; and this we certainly enjoy in great perfection, Lord Fortrole, who is the foul of our colony here, has provided a large commodious boat for this purpose. We meet every morning at eight o'clock, and row about half a mile out to fea, where we strip and plunge into the water: Were it not for this, we should all of us have been as bad as the French marquis. My lord has ten watermen, who are in reality a fort of amphibious animals, as they live one half the summer in the sea. - Three or four of these generally go in with us, to pick up stragglers, and secure us from all accidents. They dive with ease to the depth of forty, and fometimes of fifty-feet; and bring up quantities of excellent shell-fish during the fummer months; but so great is their devotion, that every time they go down they make the fign of the cross, and mutter an Ave Maria, without which they think they should certainly be drowned; and were not a little fcandalized at us for emitting this ceremony. To accustom us to swimming in all circumstances, my lord has provided as suit of clothes, which we wear by turns; and from a very fhort practice, we have found it almost as commodious to fwim with as without them; we have likewise learned to ftrip in the water, and find it no very difficult matter: And I am fully perfuaded, from being accustomed to this kind of exercise, that in case of shipwreck we should have greatly the advantage over those who had never practised it; for it is by the embarrassment from the clothes, and the agitation that people are thrown into, from finding themselves in a situation they had never experienced before, that so many lives are lost in the water.

After bathing, we have an English breakfast at his lordships; and after breakfast a delightful little con-

cert which lasts for an hour and a half. Barbella, the sweetest fiddle in Italy, leads our little band. This party, I think, constitutes one principal part of the pleasure we enjoy at Naples. We have likewife fome very agreeable fociety amongst ourselves, though we cannot boast much of that with the inhabitants. There are to be fure many good people amongst them; but in general there is so very little analogy betwixt an English and a Neapolitan mind, that the true focial harmony, that great sweetner of human life, can feldom be produced. In lieu of this, (the exchange you will fay is but a bad one) the country round Naples abounds fo much in every thing that is curious both in art and nature, and affords so ample a field for speculation for the naturalist and antiquary, that a person of any curiosity may spend some months here very agreeably, and

not without profit.

Befides the discoveries of Herculaneum and Ponipeia, which, of themselves, afford a great fund of entertainment, the whole coast that surrounds this beautiful bay, particularly that near Puzzoli, Cuma, Micenum, and Baia, is covered with innumerable monuments of Roman magnificence. But, alas! how are the mighty fallen! This delightful coast, once the garden of all Italy, and inhabited only by the rich, the gay, and luxurious, is now abandoned to the poorest and most miserable of mortals. Perhaps, there is no fpot on the globe, that has undergone fo thorough a change; or that can exhibit fo striking a picture of the vanity of human grandeur. Those very walls that once lodged a Cæsar, a Lucullus, an Anthony, the richest and most voluptuous of mankind; are now occupied by the very meanest and most indigent wretches on earth, who are actually starving for want in those very apartments that were the scenes of the greatest luxury. There we are told that suppers were frequently given

given that cost fifty thousand pounds; and some,

that even amounted to double that fum.

The luxury indeed of Baia was fo great, that it became a proverb, even amongst the luxurious Romans themselves; and at Rome, we often find them upbraiding with effeminacy and epicurism, those who spent much of their time in this scene of delights; Clodious throws it in Cicero's teeth more than once: And that orator's having purchased a villa here, hurt him not a little in the opinion of the graver and more auftere part of the senate. The walls of these palaces still remain, and the poor peafants, in some places, have built up their miserable huts within them; but at prefent, there is not one gentleman or man of fashion residing in any part of this country; the former state of which, compared with the present, certainly makes the most striking contrast imaginable. Yesterday we rode over the greatest part of it a shooting porcupines, a new species of diver-fion, which I had never heard of before. We killed feveral of these animals on the Monte Barbaro, the place that formerly produced the Falernian wine, but now a barren waste. I don't know if you are acquainted with this kind of fport. To me, I own, its novelty was its greatest merit; and I would not at any time give a day of partridge for a month of porcupine shooting. Neither indeed is the flesh of these animals the most delicious in the world, though to-day most of us have dined upon it. It is extremely luscious, and foon pa'ls upon the appetite.

We are now going to lay in our fea-store, as there is some probability that we shall sail in a day or two.—Farewel—you shall hear from me again at Messina, if we are not swallowed up by

ra we are rold tops, Lappers

Charybdis.

entil zelgavi lo vad sub de albimadi pi abvidino

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On Board the Charming Molly, off the Island of Capre, May 15.

WE have now begun our expedition with every auspicious omen. This morning the melancholy firocc left us; and in place of it we have gotten a fine brisk tramontane (or N. wind) which in a few hours blew away all our vapours, and made us wonder how much the happiness of mankind depends on a blaft of wind. After eating a hearty dinner with many of our friends at Mr. Walter's, and drinking plentifully of his excellent burgundy, we took leave in the highest spirits. Had the firocc blown as yesterday, we should probably have been in tears; and not one of us would have fufpected that we were crying, only because the wind was in the South. We are not apt to Suppose it; but probably a great part of our pleasures and pains depend upon fuch trivial causes, though always ascribed to something else; sew people being willing to own themselves like a weathercock, affected by every blast. Indeed we should have naturally imputed it to the grief of parting with that excellent family whom you know for well; which no person could ever leave without regret, or fee without pleasure; but the agreeable prospect of soon meeting again, (probably better qualified to amuse and entertain them) absorbed all melancholy thoughts; and even added to that alacrity, which the delightful tour before us had already inspired.

We failed at five; and after firing our farewel fignals to our friends on shore, (whom we discovered with our glasses at some distance) we soon found

ourselves .

ourselves in the middle of the bay of Naples, surtounded by the most beautiful scenery in the world. It fell calm for an hour, on purpose to give us

time to contemplate all its beauties.

The bay is of a circular figure; in most places upwards of 20 miles in diameter; fo that including all its breaks and inequalities, the circumference is confiderably more than 60 miles. The whole of this space is so wonderfully diversified, by all the riches both of art and nature, that there is scarce an object wanting to render the scene compleat; and it is hard to fay, whether the view is more pleafing from the fingularity of many of these objects, or from the incredible variety of the whole. You fee an amazing mixture of the antient and modern; fome rifing to fame, and some finking to ruin. Palaces reared over the top of other palaces, and antient magnificence trampled under foot-by modern folly.-Mountains and islands, that were celebrated for their fertility, changed into barren wastes; and barren wastes into sertile fields and rich vineyards. Mountains funk into plains, and plains swelled in to mountains, Lakes drunk up by volcanos, and extinguished volcanos turned into lakes. The earth still smoaking in many places; and in others throwing out flame. In short, nature seems to have formed this coast in her most capricious mood; for every object is a lufus naturæ. She never feems to have gone feriously to work; but to have devoted this spot to the most unlimited indulgence of caprice and frolick.

The bay is shut out from the Mediterranean by the island of Caprè, so famous for the abode of Augustus, and afterward, so infamous for that of Tiberius. A little to the west lie those of Ischia, Procida, and Nisida; the celebrated promontory of Micanum, where Æneas landed; the classic sields of Baia, Cuma, and Puzzoli; with all the

variety

variety of scenery that formed both the Tartarus and Elyfium of the ancients; the Campi Phlegrei, or burning plains where Jupiter overcame thegiants; the Monte Novo, formed of late years by fire, the Monte Barbaro; the picturesque city of Puzzoli, with the Solfaterra smoaking above it; the beautiful promontory of Paufillipe, exhibiting the finest scenery that can be imagined, the great and opulent city of Naples, with its three castles, its harbour full of thips from every nation, its palaces, churches, and converts innumerable. The rich country from thence to Portici, covered with noble houses and gardens, and appearing only a continuation of the city. The palace of the king, with many others furrounding it, all built over the roofs of those of Herculaneum, buried near a hundred feet, by the eruptions of Vesuvius. The black fields of Lava that have run from that mountain, intermixed with gardens, vineyards, and orchards. Vesuvius itself, in the back ground of the scene, discharging volumes of fire and smoak, and forming a broad track in the air over our heads, extending without being broken or diffipated to the utmost verge of the horizon. A variety of beautiful towns and villages round the base of the mountain, thoughtless of the impending ruin that daily threatens them. Some of these are reared over the very roofs of Pomeia and Stabia, where Pliny perished; and with their foundations have pierced through the facred abodes of the antient Romans; thousands of whom he buried here, the victims of this inexorable mountain. Next follows the extenfive and romantic coast of Castello Mare, Sorrentum, and Mola; diverfified with every picturesque object in nature. It was the study of this wild and beautiful country that formed our greatest landscapepainters. This was the school of Pouffin and Salvator Rosa, but more particularly of the last, who composed

composed many of his most celebrated pieces from the bold craggy rocks that surround this coast; and no doubt it was from the daily contemplation of these romantic objects, that they stored their minds with that variety of ideas they have communicated to the world with such elegance in their works.

Now, should I tell you that this extensive coast, this prodigious variety of mountains, valleys, promontories and islands, covered with an everlasting verdure, and loaded with the richest fruits, is all the produce of fubterraneous fire; it would require, I am afraid, too great a firetch of faith to believe me; yet the fact is certain, and can only be doubted by those who have wanted time or curiofity to examine it. It is strange, you will say, that nature should make use of the same agent to create as to deftroy; and that what has only been looked upon as the confumer of countries, is in fact the very power that produces them. Indeed, this part of our earth feems already to have undergone the fentence pronounced upon the whole of it: But, like the Phœnix, has rifen again from its own ashes, in much greater beauty and splendour than before it was confumed. The traces of these dreadful conflagrations are fill conspicuous in every corner; they have been violent in their operations, but in the end have proved falutary in their effects. The fire in many places is not yet extinguished, but Vesuvius is now the only spot where it rages with any degree of activity.

Mr. Hamilton, our minister here, who is no lest distinguished in the learned, than in the polite world, has lately examined it with a truly philosophic eye, and this is the result of all his observations; however, at present, I only sit down to give you an account of the prospect of this singular country, and not to write its natural history; which would lead me into too vast a field: I shall

referve

referve that curious subject till our return, when I shall have more leisure to make you acquainted with it.—I beg therefore you would at least sufpend your judgment for the present, and do not condemn me before I am heard.

After contemplating this delightful prospect, till sun-set, the wind sprung up again, and we have now almost reached Capre, 30 miles distant from Naples. We have just spoken with an English ship. They tell us, that the Marquis of Carmarthen, Lord Fortrose, and Mr. Hamilton observing the calm, took a boat to make us a visit; but unfortunately mistaking their vessel for ours, we have had the mortification to miss them.

The night is very dark, and mount Vesuvius is flaming at a dreadful rate. We can observe the red-hot stones thrown to a vast height in the air; and, after their fall rolling down the side of the mountain. Our ship is going so smooth, that we are scarce sensible of the motion; and if this wind continue, before to morrow night we shall be in sight of Sicily. Adieu. The captain is making a bowl of grog, and promising us a happy voyage.

16, All wrong—Sick to death—Execrable firoce wind, and directly contrary—Vile heaving waves—A plague of all fea voyages—That author was furely right, who faid, that land voyages * were much to be preferred.

17 in the morning. For these 24 hours past we have been groaning to one another from our beds; execrating the waves, and wishing that we had rather been at the mercy of all the banditti of Calabri. We are now beginning to change our tune. The sirocc is gone, and the wind is considerably fallen; however, we are still three woeful figures. Our servants too are as sick and as helpless as we. The captain says, that Philip,

our Sicilian man, was frightened out of his wits; and has been praying to St. Januarius with all his might. He now thinks he has heard him; and imputes the change of the weather entirely to his interest with his faint.

17th. Three o'clock. Weather pleasant and favourable.—A fine breeze fince teu;—have just come in fight of Strombolo—Our pilot says it is near 20 leagues off. We have likewise a view of the mountains of Calabria, but at a very great distance. Ship steady; and sea-sickness almost gone.

Eleven at night. The weather is now fine and we are all well. After spying Strombolo, by degrees we came in fight of the rest of the Lipari islands, and part of the coast of Sicily. These islands are picturesque, and several of them still emit smoak, particularly Volcano and Volcanello; but none of them, for some ages past, except Strombolo, have made any eruptions of fire. We are just now lying within about three miles of that curious island, and can see its operations distincely. It appears to be a volcano of a very different nature from Vesuvius, the explosions of which fucceed one another with fome degree of regularity, and have no great variety of duration. Now I have been observing Strombolo, ever fince it fell dark, with a good deal of pleafure, but not without some degree of perplexity, as I cannot account for its variety. Sometimes its explosions refemble those of Vesuvius, and the light seems only to be occasioned by the quantity of fiery stones thrown into the air; and as foon as these have fallen down, it appears to be extinguished, till another explofion causes a fresh illumination: This I have obferved always to be the case with Vesuvius; except when the lava has rifen to the fummit of the mountain, and continued without variety to illuminate the air around it.—The light from Strombolo evidently depends on fome other caufe. Sometimes a clear red flame issues from the crater of the mountain, and continues to blaze without interruption, for near the space of half an hour. The fire is of a different colour from the explofions of stones, and is evidently produced from a different cause. It would feem as if some inflammable substance were suddenly kindled up in the bowels of the mountain. It is attended with no noise, nor explosion that we are fensible of. It has now fallen calm, and we shall probably have an opportunity of examining this volcano more minutely tomorrow. We were told at Naples that it had lately made a violent eruption, and had begun to form a new island at some little distance from the old; which piece of intelligence was one of our great inducements to this expedition. We think we have difcovered this island, as we have observed several times the appearance of a small flame arising out of the sea, a little to the south-west of Strombolo; and suppose it must have issued from this new island; but it is possible this light may come from the lower part of the island of Strombolo itself. We shall see to-morrow.

18th. We are still off Strombolo, but unfortunately at present it intercepts the view of that spot from whence we observed the slame to arise, and we can see no appearance of any new Island, nor indeed of any lava that has of late sprung from the old one. We have a distinct view of the crater of Strombolo, which seems to be different from Vesuvius and all the old volcanos that surround Naples. Of these, the craters are without exception in the center, and form the highest part of the mountain. That of Strombolo is on its side, and not within 200 yards of its summit. From the crater to the sea, the island is entirely composed of the same fort of ashes and burnt matter

as the conical part of Vesuvius; and the quantity of this matter is perpetually increasing from the uninterrupted discharge from the mountain; for of all the volcanos we read of, Strombolo feems to be the only one that burns without ceafing. Ætna and Vesuvius often lie quiet for many months, even years, without the least appearance of fire, but Strombolo is ever at work, and for ages past has been looked upon as the great lighthouse of these seas.

It is truly wonderful, how fuch a constant and immense fire is maintained for thousands of years, in the midst of the ocean! That of the other Lipari islands feems now almost extinct, and the force of the whole to be concentered in Strombolo, which We still observe acts as one great vent to them all. Volcano and Volcanello throwing out volumes of fmoke, but during the whole night we could not perceive the least spark of fire from either of them.

It is probable, that Strombolo, as well as all the rest of these islands, is originally the work of subterraneous fire. The matter of which they are composed, in a manner demonstrates this; and many of the Sicilian authors confirm it. There are now eleven of them in all; and none of the antients mention more than feven. Fazzello, one of the best. Sicilian authors, gives an account of the production of Volcano, now one of the most considerable of these islands. He says it happened in the early time of the republick, and is recorded by Eusebius, Pliny, and others. He adds, that even in his time, in the beginning of the 16th century it still difcharged quantities of fire and of pumice flones; but that in the preceding century in the year 1444, on the 5th of February, there had been a very great eruption of this island, which shook all Sicily, and alarmed the coast of Italy as far as Naples. He fays the fea boiled all round the island, and rocks of a vaft

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a vast size were discharged from the crater; that fire and smoke in many places pierced through the waves, and that the navigation amongst these islands was totally changed; rocks appearing where it was formerly deep water; and many of the straits and

shallows were entirely filled up.

Heobserves that Aristotle, in his book on meteors, takes notice of a very early eruption of this island, by which not only the coast of Sicily, but likewise many cities in Italy were covered with ashes. It has probably been that very eruption which formed the island. He describes Strombolo to have been, in this time, pretty much the same as at this day; only that it then produced a great quantity of cotton, which is not now the case. The greatest part of it appears to be barren. On the north side there are a sew vine-yards; but they are very meagre; Opposite to these, there is a rock at some distance from land; it seems to be entirely of lava, and is not less than 50 or 60 feet above the water.

The whole island of Strombolo is a mountain that rises suddenly from the sea; it is about ten miles round, and is not of the exact conical form, supposed common to all volcanos. We were determined to have landed on the island, and to have attempted to examine the volcano; but our Sicilian pilot assures us, that the crater is not only inaccessible (which indeed I own it appears to be) but that we shall likewise be obliged to perform a quarantine of 48 hours at Messina; and that besides, we should run a great risk of being attacked by the natives, who are little better than savages, and always on the alarm against the Turks.—On weighing these reasons, and putting the question, it was

carried, To proceed on our voyage.

I own it is with much regret that I leave this curious island, without being better acquainted with it. I have been looking with a good glass all round, Vol. I.

but can see no marks of the eruption we heard so much of at Naples; indeed, the fouth-west part, where we saw the appearance of fire, is still hid from us by the interpolition of the island; and if there has been an eruption, it was certainly on that fide: It is probable we shall never be able to learn whether there has been one or not; or, at least, to make ourselves masters of any of the particulars relating to it, for events of that kind do not make fuch a noise in this ignorant and indolent country, as the blowing of an aloe, or a goofeberry-bush at Christmas, does in England. Strombolo rifes to a great height; our pilot fays, higher than Vefuvius; but I think he is mistaken. Both the captain and he agree, that in clear weather it is discoverable at the distance of 25 leagues; and that at night its flames are to be seen still much farther; so that its visible horizon cannot be less than 500 miles, which will require a very confiderable elevation.

The revenue these islands bring to the king of Naples is by no means inconsiderable. They produce great quantities of alum, sulphur, nitre, cinnabar, and most sorts of fruits, particularly raisins, currants and sign in great perfection; some of their wines are likewise much esteemed; particularly the

Malvafia, well known all over Europe.

The island of Lipari (from which all the rest take the name) is by much the largest, as well as the most fertile. By the description of Aristotle it appears that it was in his time, what Strombolo is in ours, considered by failors as a light-house, as its fires were never extinguished. It has not suffered from subterraneous three for many ages past, though it every where bears the marks of its former state. This is the island supposed by Virgil (who is one of our travelling companions) to be the habitation of Æolus; but indeed all of them were formerly called Æolian. As they were full of

vast caverns, roaring with internal fires, the poets feigned that Æolus kept the winds prisoners here, and let them out at his pleasure. This allegorical fiction is of great use both to Virgil and Homer, when they want to make a storm, and forms no inconsiderable part of their machinery. A goddess has nothing to do but take a slight to the Lipari islands, and Æolus, who was the very pink of courtesy, has always a storm ready at her command.

Homer, indeed, departing fadly from his usual dignity, supposes that Æolus kept the winds here each tied up in their respective bags; and when any particular wind was demanded, he made them a present of a bag sull of it, to use at discretion. Some of the ancient historians (Diodorus I think) says that this sable took its rise from a wise king named Æolus; who, from observing the smoke of these burning islands, and other phænomena attending them, had learned to foretel the weather; and from thence was said to have the command of the winds.

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The forge of Vulcan too has been supposed by the poets to be placed in Hiera, one of these islands. Virgil sends him here, to make the celestial armour for Aineas, and gives a noble description of this gloomy habitation*, where he found the Cyclops busy forging a thunderbolt for Jupiter; the account of which is very singular. This island is

* Amid the Hesperian and Sicilian stood
All black with smook, a rocky island stood,
The dark Vulcanian land, the region of th egou.
Here the grim Cyclops ply, in vaults profouna,
The huge Æolian forge, that thunders round.
Th' eternal anvils ring the dungeon o'er;
From side to side the stery caverns roar, &c.

† Beneath their hands, tremendous to survey,
Half rough, half form'd, the dreadful engine lay.
Three points of rain; three forks of hail conspire:
Three arm'd with wind, and three were barb'd with sire.

The mass they temper'd thick with livid rays, Fear, wrath, and terror, and the light'nings blaze. now called Volcano, the same that is recorded to have been produced by fire in the time of the republic. So that Virgil commits here a very great anachronism, in sending Vulcan to a place which at that time did not exist, nor for many ages after. But this bold poetical licence he amply repays us for, by the fine description he gives of it. These islands, he says, were called Volcanian as well as Æolian:

" Volcani domus, et Volcania nomine tellus."

So that the change of the name from Hiera to Volcano was a very natural one. This is the island that Pliny calls Terasia; and both Strabo and he gives

an account of its production.

19th. Found ourselves within half a mile of the coast of Sicily, which is low, but finely variegated. The opposite coast of Calabria is very high, and the mountains are covered with the finest verdure. It was almost a dead calm, our ship scarce moving half a mile in an hour, fo that we had time to get a complete view of the famous rock of Scylla, on the Calabrian fide, Cape Pylorus on the Sicilian, and the celebrated Straits of the Faro that runs between them. Whilst we were still some miles distant from the entry of the Straits, we heard the roaring of the current, like the noise of some large impetuous river confined between narrow banks. This increased in proportion as we advanced, till we saw the water in many places raised to a considerable height, and forming large eddies or whirlpools. The fea in every other place was as smooth as glass. Our old pilot told us, that he had often feen ships caught in these eddies, and whirled about with great rapidity, without obeying the helm in the smallest degree. When the weather is calm, there is little danger; but when the waves meet with this violent. current, it makes a dreadful fea. He fays, there

were five ships wrecked in this spot last winter. We observed that the current set exactly for the rock of Scylla, and would infallibly have carried any thing thrown into it against that point; so that it was not without reason the ancients have painted it as an object of fuch terror. It is about a mile from the entry of the Faro, and forms a small promonto-IV. which runs a little out to fea, and meets the whole force of the waters, as they come out of the narrowest part of the Straits: The head of this promontory is the famous Scylla. It must be owned that it does not altogether come up to the formidable description that Homer gives of it; the reading of which (like that of Shakespear's Cliff) almost makes one's head giddy. Neither is the passage for wondrous narrow and difficult as he makes it. Indeed it is probable that the breadth of it is greatly increased fince his time, by the violent impetuofity of the current. And this violence too must have always diminished, in proportion as the breadth of the channel encreased.

Our pilot fays, there are many finall rocks that shew their heads near the base of the large one. These are probably the dogs that are described as howling round the monster Scylla. There are likewise many caverns that add greatly to the noise of the water, and tend still to encrease the horror of the scene. The rock is near 200 feet high. There is a kind of castle or fort built on its summit; and the town of Scylla or Sciglio, containing three or sour hundred inhabitants, stands on its south side, and gives the title of prince to a Calabrese family.

As the current was directly against us, we were obliged to lie to for some hours, till it turned. The motion of the water ceased for some time, but in a few minutes it began in the opposite direction, though not with such violence. We lay just opposite to Cape Pelorus; (where the light-house is

now built.) It is faid to have been thus named by Hannibal, in recompence to Pelorus his pilot, for having but him to death on this fpot, on a falle fufpicion of his wanting to betray him; For feeing himself land-locked on all fides, he thought there was no escaping, and that Pelorus had been bribed to deliver him up; but as foon as he discovered the Straits, he repented of his rashness, and some years afterwards erected a statue here, in atonement to the manes of Pelorus. Pomponius Mela tell this flory; from whence he draws two very wife inferences: That Hannibal must have been extremely passionate; and that he knew nothing at all of Geography. Others deny this authority, and fay it was named Pelorus from Ulysses's pilot, who was drowned near to this place: but there can be no fort of foundation for this conjecture; for Ulysses's whole crew were drowned at the same time, and he himself was driven through these Straits, mounted on the broken mast of his ship. It is like most disputes amongst antiquaries, a matter of mighty little confequence; and I leave you at full liberty to chuse which of the two accounts you pleafe.

From hence we had an opportunity of observing a pretty large portion of Calabria, which formerly constituted a considerable part of that celebrated country, known by the name of Great Greece, and looked upon as one of the most fertile in the empire. These beautiful hills and mountains are covered with trees and brush-wood to the very summit; and appear pretty much in the same state as some of the wilds of America, that are just beginning to be cultivated. Some little spots where the woods are cleared away, just serve to shew the natural sertility of the soil, and what this country might soon be brought to, were industry and population encouraged; but it still remains a good deal in the same situation as when the barbarous nations left it; and I be-

lieve

lieve it is hard to fay, whether their tyranny or that of Spain has been the most oppressive. After the invation of those nations, and during the time of the dark and barbarous ages, this country, (like many others) from the highest state of culture and civilization, became a wild and barren wilderness, overgrown with thickets and forests; and, indeed, fince the revival of arts and agriculture, perhaps of all Europe, this is the country that has profited the least; retaining still, both in the wildness of its fields and ferocity of its inhabitants more of the Gothic barbarity than is to be met with any where . else. Some of these forests are of a vast extent, and absolutely impenetrable, and no doubt conceal in their thickets many valuable monuments of its ancient magnificence. Of this indeed we have a very recent proof in the discovery of Pestum, a Grecian city, that had not been heard of for many ages; till of late, some of its lofty temples were seen, peeping over the tops of the woods; upbraiding mankind for their shameful neglect; and calling upon them to bring it once more to light. Accordingly curiofity, and the hopes of gain, a still more powerful motive, foon opened a passage, and exposed to view these valuable and respectable relics.—But here it would be out of place to give you an account of them; I shall reserve that till my return.

As foon as our ship entered the current, we were carried along with great velocity towards Messina, which is twelve miles from the entry of the Straits. However, as the passage widens in proportion as you advance, the current of consequence becomes less rapid. At Messina it is four miles broad. At the mouth of the Straits, betwixt the promontories of Pelorus in Sicily, and the Coda de Volpe (or the Fox's tail) in Calabria, it appears scarcely to be a mile. Most of the ancient writers are of opinion that Sicily was formerly

merly joined to the continent in this fpot, and that the separation must have been made by some violent convulsion of the earth. If this is true, which indeed does not appear improbable, it must have happened far beyond the reach of all historians, as none of them, at least that I have seen, pretend any thing but conjecture for the foundation of their opinion. Indeed Claudian (were credit to be given to Poets) says positively,

Trinacria quondam Italia pars una fuit."

And Virgil too, in his third Eneid, tells the same story:

" Hæc loca vi quandam, et vasta convalsa ruina, &c."

Pliny, Strabo, Diodorus, and many others, both historians and philosophers, are of the same sentiments, and pretend that the strata in the opposite sides of the Straits perfectly correspond: Like the white rocks near Dover and Boulogne, which have given rise to an opinion of the same kind. However, the similarity in that ease, is much more

striking to the eye at least than in this.

The approach to Messina is the finest that can be imagined; it is not so grand as that of Naples, but it is much more beautiful, and the key exceeds any thing I have ever yet seen, even in Holland. It is built in the form of a crescent, and is surrounded by a range of magnificent buildings, sour stories high, and exactly uniform, for the space of an Italian mile. The street betwist these and the sea is about an hundred seet wide, and forms one of the most delightful walks in the world. It enjoys the freest air, and commands the most beautiful prospect: It is only exposed to the morning sun, being shaded all the rest of the day

by these buildings. It is besides constantly refreshed by the cooling breeze from the Straits; for the current of the water produces likewise a current in the air, that renders this one of the

coolest habitations in Sicily. Is to require and

We cast anchor about four this afternoon, near the center of this enchanted femi-circle, the beauty of which greatly delighted us; but our pleafure was foon interrupted by a discovery that the name of one of our fervants had been omitted in our bills of health; and an assurance from the captain that if he was discovered we should certainly be obliged to perform a long quarantine. Whilst we were deliberating upon this weighty matter, we observed a boat with the people of the healthoffice approaching us. We had just time to get him wrapped up in a hammock, and shut down below the hatches; with orders not to stir in case of a search, and not to appear again above deck till he should be called. The poor fellow was obliged to keep in his hole till it was dark, as our conful and some people of the health-office flayed on board much longer than we could have wished, and we are still obliged to conceal him; for if he be discovered, we shall probably get into a very bad fcrape. They are particularly firich here in this respect; and indeed they have great reason to be so; since this beautiful city was almost annihilated by the plague in the year 1743, when upwards of 70,000 people are faid to have died in it and its diffrict in the space of a few months.

We have now got on shore, and are lodged in the most wretched of inns; although said to be a first-rate one for Sicily: but we are contented; for surely after bad ship accommodation and sea-sickness, any house will appear a palace, and any bit of dry land a paradise.

I shall

I shall send this off, by the post, which goes tomorrow for Naples; and shall continue from day to day to give you some account of our transactions; trifling as they are, there will probably be something new; and it will add greatly to the pleasure of our expedition, to think that it has contributed to your entertainment. Adieu.

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Meffina, May 20.

I H E harbour of Messina is formed by a small promontory or neck of land that runs off from the east end of the city, and separates that beautiful bason from the rest of the Straits. The shape of this promontory is that of a reaping-hook, the curvature of which forms the harbour, and fecures it from all winds. From the striking refemblance of its form, the Greeks who never gave a name that did not either describe the object, or express some of its most remarkable properties, called this place Zancle or the Sickle, and feigned that the fickle of Saturn fell on this spot, and gave it its form. But the Latins, who were notquite fo fond of fable, changed its name to Messina (from messis, a harvest) because of the great fertility of its fields. It is certainly one of the fafest harbours in the world after ships have got in; but it is likewise one of the most difficult of access. The celebrated gnlph or whirlpool of Charybdis lies

lies near to its entry, and often occasions such an intestine and irregular motion in the water, that the helm loses most of its power, and ships have great difficulty to get in, even with the fairest wind that can blow. This whirlpool, I think, is brobably formed by the fmall promontory I have mentioned; which contracting the Straits in this fpot, must necessarily increase the velocity of the current; but no doubt other causes of which we are ignorant, concur, for this will by no means account for all the appearances which it hath produced. The great noise occasioned by the tumultuous motion of the waters in this place, made the antients liken it to a voracious feamonster perpetually roaring for its prey; and it has been represented by their authors as the most tremendous passage in the world. Aristotle gives a long and a formidable description of it in his 125th chapter De Admirandis, which I find translated in an old Sicilian book I have got here. It begins. "Adeo profundum, horridumque spec-" taculum, &c." but it is too long to transcribe. It is likewise described by Homer, * 12th of the Odyssey; Virgil, † 3d Æneid; Lucretius, Ovid, Sal-

† That realm of old, a ruin huge was rent, In length of ages from the continent. With force convulfive burst the isle away; Thro' the dread opening broke the thundring sea: POPE.

^{*} Dire Scylla there a scene of horror forms,
And here Charybdis fills the deep with storms:
When the tide rushes from her rumbling caves,
The rough rock roars; tumultuous boil the waves;
They tos, they foam, a wild confusion raise,
Like waters bubbling o'er the siery blaze;
Eternal mists obscure th' aereal plain,
And high above the rock she spouts the main.
When in her gulphs the rushing sea subsides,
She drains the ocean with the restuent tides,
The rock re-bellows with a thundring sound;
Deep, wondrous deep, below appears the ground.

lust, Seneca, as also by many of the old Italian and Sicilian poets, who all speak of it in terms of horror; and represent it as an object that inspired terror, even when looked on at a distance. It certainly is not now so formidable; and very brobably, the violence of this motion, continued for so many ages, has by degrees worn smooth the rugged rocks, and jutting shelves, that may have intercepted and confined the waters. The breadth of the Straits too, in this place, I make no doubt is considerably enlarged. Indeed, from the nature of things it must be so; the perpetual friction occasioned by the current must wear away the bank on each side, and enlarge the bed of the water.

The vessels in this passage were obliged to go as near as possible to the coast of Calabria, in order to avoid the suction occasion by the whirling of the waters in this vortex; by which means when they came to the narrowest and most rapid part of the Straits, betwixt Cape Pelorus and Scylla, they were in great danger of being carried upon that rock. From whence the proverb, still applied to those, who in attempting to avoid one

evil fall into another,

"Incidit in Scyllam, eupiens evitare Charybdim."

There is a fine fountain of white marble on the key, representing Neptune holding Scylla and Charyb-

At once the thund'ring sea Sicilia tore,

And sunder'd from the sair Hesperian shore;

And still the neighbring easts and towns divides

With scanty channels and contracted tides.

Fierce to the right tremendous Seylla roars,

Charybdis on the left the stood devours:

Thrice swallow'd in her womb subsides the sea,

Deep, deep as hell; and thrice she spouts away

From her black bellowing gulphs disgorg'd on high

Waves after waves, that dash against the sky.

of.

dis chained, under the emblematical figures of two

fea-monsters, as represented by the poets.

The little neck of land, forming the harbour of Messina, is strongly fortified. The citadel, which is indeed a very time work, is built on that part which connects it with the main land. The farthermost point, which runs out to sea, is defended by four small forts, which command the entry into the harbour. Betwixt these lie the lazaret and a light-house to warn failors of their approach to Charybdis, as that other on Cape Pelorus is intended to give them notice of Scylla.

It is probably from these light-bonses (by the Greeks called Pharoi) that the whole of this celebrated Strait has been denominated the Faro of

Messina.

There are a number of gallies and gallots in this beautiful harbour, which fill add greatly to its beauty. Three of these sailed this morning, in order to cruize round the island, and to protect it from the fudden invalion of the Barbarians, who are often very troublesome on the south coast. These vessels made a very picturesque appearance as they went out of the harbour; their oars moving all together, with the greatest regularity. I think there are nine or ten men to each oar; and indeed it appears to be the hardest work you can imagine. They all rife every stroke of the oar, and when they pull, they almost throw themselves on their backs, and feem to exert their utmost force. These wretches are chained to their oars, and fleep every night on the bare benches, without any thing to throw over them. Yet, what is firange, notwithstanding all the mifery they fuffer, I am told there was never known an instance of any of them putting themselves to death. They often, indeed, confer that favour upon one another, but it is only in their quarrels, and by no means out of kindness. In a company

of English in the same circumstances, promotion would probably go on much faster, as there would be no want of vacancies, provided only ropes and knives were to be had.

We intended this morning to have paid our refpects to the prince of Villa Franca, the governor, and to have delivered our letters; but he is gone to his country-house, and as there are no carriages to be had, we are obliged to wait his arrival in town, which will probably be to-morrow or next day.

We are still under a good deal of uneasiness about our servant, and are obliged to conceal him carefully from the people of the health-office, who seem to haunt us, as we have met them this morning in all our walks. Were he to be discovered, perhaps some of us might have the pleasure of making a little voyage on board one of those gallies, for our amusement. Indeed the captain of the ship, poor sellow, would run the greatest risk, who is obliged to answer for every person on board.—We shall leave this place as soon as possible; for I do not believe there is much more to be seen about it.

20th at night. After dinner our depute conful (a Sicilian) carried us to feveral convents, where we were received by the nuns with great politeness and affability. We converfed with them for fome hours through the grate, and found fome of them by no means deficient, either in point of knowledge or fprightliness: but none of them had fincerity enough (which we met with in Portugal more than once) to acknowledge the unhappiness of their fituation. All pretended to be happy and contented, and declared they would not change their prison for the most brilliant situation in life. However, fome of them had a foft melancholy in their countenance which gave the lie to their words; and I am persuaded, in a tête-tête, and on a more intimate acquaintance, they would have told a very different story. Several of them are extremely

extremely handfome; but indeed, I think they always appear so; and am very certain, from srequent experience, that there is no artificial ornament, or studied embellishment whatever, that can produce half so strong an essect, as the modest and simple attire of a pretty young nun, placed behind a double iron grate. To see an amiable, unaffected, an unadorned person, that might have been an honour and an ornament to society, make a voluntary resignation of her charms, and give up the world and all its pleasures, for a life of sasting and mortification, it cannot fail to move our pity;

"And pity melts the mind to love."

There is another confideration which tends much to increase these feelings; that is our total incapacity ever to alter her situation.—The pleasure of relieving an object in distress, is the only resuge we have against the pain which the seeing of that object occasions; but here, this is utterly denied us, and we seel with sorrow, that pity is all we can bestow.

From these, and the like resections, a man generally seels himself in bad spirits after conversing with amiable nuns. Indeed, it is hardly possible, without a heavy heart, to leave the grate; that inexorable and impenetrable barrier.—At last we took our leave, expressing our happiness, in being admitted so near them; but at the same time deploring our misery, in seeing them for ever removed at so unmeasurable a distance from us. They were much pleased with our visit, and begged we would repeat it every day during our stay at Messina; but this might prove dangerous.

On leaving the convent, we observed a great concourse of people on the top of a high hill, at some distance from the city. The consultold us, it

was the celebration of a great festival in honour of St. Francis, and was worth our going to fee. Accordingly, we arrived just as the saint made his appearance. He was carried through the croud with vaft ceremony, and received the homage of the people with a becoming dignity; after which he was again lodged in his chapel, where be performs a number of miracles every day, to all those who have abundance of money and abundance of faith. His ministers, however, are only a fet of poor greafy capachins: who indeed do not feem to have enriched themselves in his service. In general, he is but a shabby master if one may judge by the tattered cloaths of his fervants; and St. Benedict, who does not pretend to half his fanctity, beats him all to nothing. The people continued to dance, in foft Sicilian measures, till after fun-fet, when they retired. Many of the country girls are extremely handfome, and dance with a good grace. The young fellows were all in their Sunday's cloaths, and made a good appearance. The affembly room was a fine green plain on the top of the hill. It pleased us very much, and put us in mind of some of Theoritus's descriptions of the Sicilian pleasures. But Theocritus, if he could have raifed up his head, would probably have been a good deal puzzled what to make of the shabby figure of St. Francis, marching thro' a mongst them with fuch majefly and folemnity. Another part of the ceremony too would have greatly alarmed him, as indeed it did us. The whole court before the church was furrounded with a triple row of finall iron camon, about fix inches long; thefe were charged to the muzzle, and rammed very hard; after which they were fet close to each other, and a train laid, that completed the communication through the whole number, which must have exceeded 2000. Fite was fet to the train, and

in two or three minutes, the whole was discharged, by a running fire; the reports following one another so quick, that it was impossible for the ear to seperate them. The effect was very grand; but it would have been nothing without the fine echo from the high mountains on each side of the Straits, which prolonged the sound for some considerable time after the firing was finished.

The view from the top of this hill, is beautiful beyond description. The Straits appear like a vast majestic river, slowing slowly betwixt two ridges of mountains, and opening by degrees from its narrowest point, till it swells to the fize of an ocean. Its banks, at the same time, adorned with rich cornfields, vineyards, orchards, towns, villages, and churches. The prospect is terminated on each side by the tops of high mountains covered with wood.

We observed in our walks to-day, many of the flowers that are much efteemed in our gardens, and others too that we are not acquainted with. Larkfpur, flos Adonis, Venus' looking-glass, hawksweed, and very fine lupins grow wild over all these mountains. They have likewise a variety of flowering shrubs; particularly one in great plenty, which I do not recollect ever to have feen before: It bears a beautiful round fruit, of a bright shining yellow. They call it, Il pomo d'oro, or golden apple. All the fields about Messina are covered with the richest white clover, intermixed with a variety of aromatic plants which perfume the air, and render their walks exceedingly delightful. But what is remarkable, we were most sensible of this perfume, when walking on the harbour which is at the greatest distance from these fields. I mentioned this peculiarity to a Messinese gentleman, who tells me that the falt produced here by the heat of the fun, emits a greatful odour, something like violets; and

and it is that, probably, which perfumes the seashore. On consulting Fazzello De rebus Siculis, I find he takes notice of the same singularity; and likewise observes, that the water of the Straits has a viscous or glutinous quality, which by degrees cements the sand and gravel together, and at last consolidates them to the solidity of a rock.

There are fine shady walks on all sides of Meffina; fome of these run along the sea-shore, and are for ever fanned by the cooling breeze from the Straits. The houses are large, and most of the articles of life are cheap and in plenty; particularly fish, which are reckoned better here, than any where else in the Mediterranean. The hire of lodgings is next to nothing; almost one half of that noble range of buildings I have deferibed, being absolutely uninhabited fince the desolation of 1743; fo that the proprietors are glad to get tenants on any terms. It now occurs to me, that from all these considerations, there is no place I have feen, fo admirably calculated for the refidence of that flock of valetudinarians, which every autumn leave our country with the swallows, in fearch of warm climates. I have been enquiring with regard to their winter feason, and find all agree, that, in general, it is much preserable to that of Naples. They allow they have sometimes heavy rain for two or three weeks; but it never lasts longer; and besides, they have always fome fair hours every day, when people can go out for exercise; for the moment the rain is over the walks are dry, the foil being a light gravel.

The advantages of Messina over Naples in other respects, I think, are considerable. At Naples there are no walks; and the truth is, they have no occasion for them, no more indeed than they have for legs; for you know as well as I, that

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walking there, is little less infamous than stealing; and any person that makes use of his limbs is looked upon as a blackguard, and despised by all good company. The rides too are all at a great distance; and you are obliged to go some nriles on streets and pavement before you get into the country; belides palling the vile grotto of Paufillipe, where you are in danger of being blinded and stifled with dust. There are seldom any public diversions here; the attending of which at Naples, and complying with their bad hours, does often more than counteract all the benefit obtained from the climate. That detestable practife of gaming too, is by no means fo prevalant here; which from the anxiety it occasions to the mind, and lassitude to the body, must be death to all hectic people, weak breafts or delicate nerves. I could fay much more on this fubject, but as I have many of these circumstances only from the report of the inhabitants, it makes me more diffident than if I had known them from my own experience.

We found our banker, Mr. M—, a very fenfible man, and spent some hours with him, both this morning and evening, very agreeably. He has given us some account of the police of the country, the most singular, perhaps, of any in the world, to such a degree, indeed, that I shall not venture to tell it you, till I have talked it over with some other people, to see if the accounts agree;—though from the character that gentleman bears, both here and at Naples, he is as good

authority as any in the island.

The prince of Villa Franca is arrived; so that we shall probably have our audience to-morrow morning. Adieu—We are just going to sup upon steaks made of the pesce spada, or sword sish, which are caught in great plenty in these seas. The sword of this one, is upwards of four seet long;

D 2

and

and a formidable weapon it is;—not unlike a Highland broad-fword. This fish, when cut, bears a perfect resemblance to flesh; so much that none of us doubted, it was beef-steaks they were dressing for us, and expressed our surprize at finding that dish in Sicily.—Good night.

LETTER IV.

gelinikasi kud Likeentili ildebudyi tida kasa Katapin baga minggaliyan massim telin nege

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WE are just returned from the prince's. He received us politely, but with a good deal of state. He offered us the use of his carriages, as there are none to be hired; and, in the usual stile, defired to know in what he could be of fervice to us. We told him, with an apology for our abrupt departure, that we were obliged to fet off to-morrow, and begged his protection on our journey. He replied, that he would give orders for guards to attend us, that should be answerable for every thing; that we need give ourselves no farther trouble; that whatever number of mules we had occasion for should be ready at the door of the inn, at any hour we should think proper to appoint. He added, that we might entirely rely on those guards, who were people of the most determined resolution, as well as of the most approved fidelity, and would not fail to chastise on the spot any perfon who should presume to impose upon us.

Now, who do you think these trusty guards are composed of? Why, of the most daring, and

most

most hardened villains perhaps, that are to be met with upon earth, who, in any other country, would have been broken upon the wheel, or hung in chains; but are here publickly protected, and universally seared and respected. It was this part of the police of Sicily, that I was afraid to give you an account of: But I have now conversed with the prince's people on the subject, and they have confirmed every circumstance Mr.

M- made me acquainted with.

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He told me, that in this east part of the island called Val Demoni, (from the devils that are supposed to inhabit Mount Ætna) it has ever been found impracticable to extirpate the banditti, there being numberless caverus and subterraneous pasfages in that mountain, where no troops could possibly pursue them: That, besides, as they are known to be perfectly determined and refolute, never failing to take a dreadful revenge on all who have offended them, the prince of Villa Franca has embraced it, not only as the fafest, but likewise as the wisest, and most political scheme, to become their declared patron and protector. And fuch of them as think proper to leave their mountains and forests, though perhaps only for a time, are fure to meet with good encouragement, and fecurity in his fervice; they enjoy the most unbounded considence, which, in no instance, they have ever yet been found to make an improper or dishonest use of. They are clothed in the prince's livery, yellow and green, with filver lace; and wear likewife a badge of their honourable order, which entitles them to univerfal fear and respect from the people.

I have just been interrupted by an upper servant of the prince's, who, both by his looks and language, seems to be of the same worthy fraternity. He tells us, that he has ordered our mule-teers,

D 3

at their peril, to be ready by day-break; but that we need not go till we think proper; for it is their business to attend on nostri eccellenzi. He favs he has likewise ordered two of the most desperate fellows in the whole island to accompany us; adding, in a fort of whifper, that we need be under no apprehension; for if any person fhould presume to impose upon us to the value of a fingle baioce, * they would certainly put them to death. I gave him an ounce, twhich I knew was what he expected; on which he redoubled his bows and his eccellenzis, and declared we were the most honorabili Signori he had ever met with, and that if we pleased, he himself should have the honour of attending us, and would chaffife any person that should dare to take the wall of us, or injure us in the smallest trifle. We thanked him for his zeal, shewing him we had swords of our own. On which, bowing respectfully, he retired.

I can now, with more affurance, give you fome account of the conversation I had with Signior M——, who as I said appears to be a very intelligent man, and has resided here for these many

years.

He fays, that in some circumstances these banditti are the most respectable people of the island; and have by much the highest, and most romantic notions of what they call their point of honour. That, however criminal they may be with regard to society in general, yet, with respect to one another, and to every person to whom they have once professed it, they have ever maintained the most unshaken sidelity. The magistrates have often been obliged to protect them, and even pay them court, as they are known to be per ectly determined,

determined, and desperate; and so extremely vindictive, that they will certainly put any person to death, who has ever given them just cause of provocation. On the other hand, it never was known that any person who had put himself under their protection and shewed that he had considence in them, had cause to repent of it, or was injured by any of them, in the most minute trifle; but on the contrary, they will protect him from impositions of every kind, and scorn to go halves with the landlord, like most other conductors and travelling fervants; and will defend him with their lives, if there is occasion. That those of their number, who have thus enlisted themselves in the fervice of fociety, are known and respected by the other banditti all over the island; the persons of those they accompany are ever held facred. For these reasons, most travellers chuse to hire a couple of them from town to town; and may thus travel over the whole island in safety. To illustrate their character the more, he added two stories, which happened but a few days ago, and are still in every body's mouth:

A number of people were found digging in a place where some treasure was supposed to have been hid during the plague: As this had been forbid under the most severe penalties, they were immediately carried to prison, and expected to have been treated without mercy; but, luckily for the others, one of these heroes happened to be of the number. He wrote to the Prince of Villa Franca, and made use of such powerful arguments in their favour, that they were all immediately set at

liberty.

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This will ferve to shew their consequence with the civil power; the other story will give you a strong idea of their barbarous serocity, and the horrid mixture of stubborn vice and virtue (if I

may

may call it by that name) that seems to direct their actions. I should have mentioned, that they have a practice of borrowing money from the country people, who, never dare refuse them; and if they promise to pay it, they have ever been found punctual and exact, both as to the time and the sum; and would much rather rob and murder an innocent person, than fail of payment at the day appointed; And this they have often been obliged to do, only in order (as they say) to fulfil their engagements, and to save their honour.

It happened within this fortnight, that the brother of one of these heroic banduti having occafion for money, and not knowing how to procure it, determined to make use of his brother's name and authority, an artifice which he thought could not eafily be discovered; accordingly he went to a country prieft, and told him his brother had occasion for twenty ducats, which he defired he would immediately lend him. The priest affured him that he had not then fo large a fum, but that if he would return in a few days it should be ready for him. The other replied, that he was afraid to return to his brother with this answer; and defired, that he would by all means take care to keep out of his way, at least till such time as he had pacified him; otherwise he could not be answerable for the consequence.—As bad fortune would have it, the very next day the priest and the robber met in a narrow road; the former fell a trembling, as the latter approached, and at last dropped on his knees to beg for mercy. The robber, aftonished at this behaviour, defired to know the cause of it. The trembling priest answered, "Il denaro, il denaro," the money, the money—but fend your brother to-morrow, and you shall have it. The haughty robber affored him that he disdained taking money of a poor prieft;

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prieft; adding, that if any of his brothers had been low enough to make fuch a demand, he himfelf was ready to advance the fum. The priest then acquainted him with the visit he had received the preceding night from his brother, by his order; affuring him, that if he had been master of the sum, he should immediately have fupplied it.—Well, fays the robber, I will now convince you whether my brother or I are most to be believed; you shall go with me to his house, which is but a few miles distant.—On their arrival before the door, the robber called on his brother, who never suspecting the discovery, immediately came to the balcony; but on perceiving the prieft, he began to make excuses for his conduct. The robber told him, there was no excuse to be made; and he only defired to know the fact, Whether he had gone to borrow money of that priest in his name or not?—On his owning he had, the robber with deliberate coolnels litted his blunderbuls to his shoulder, and that him dead; and turning to the assouthed priest, "You will now be perfuaded, faid he, that " I had no intention of robbing you at least."

You may now judge how happy we must be in the company of our guards. I don't know but this very hero may be one of them; as we are allured they are two of the most intrepid and resolute sellows in the island. I will not close this letter, till I give you some account of our journey. In the mean time, adieu. We are going to take a view of the churches and public buildings; but with these I shall trouble you very

little. 21st at night. We have been very well entertained, both from what we have feen and heard. We used to admire the dexterity of some of the divers at Naples, when they went to the depth of forty-eight or fifty feet, and could not conceive how a man could remain three minutes under water without drawing breath; but these are nothing to the feats of one Colas, a native of this place, who is faid to have lived for feveral days in the sea, without coming to land: and from thence got the firname of Peice, or the fish. Some of the Sicilian authors affirm, that he caught fish merely by his agility in the water; and the credulous Kircher afferts, that he could walk across the Straits at the bottom of the sea.—Be that as it will, he was fo much celebrated for fwimming and diving, that one of their kings (Frederick) came on purpole to fee him perform: which royal vifit proved fatal to poor Pesce; for the king, after admiring his wonderful force and agility, had the cruelty to propose his diving near the gulph of Charybdis; and to tempt him the more, threw in a large golden cup, which was to be his prize should he bring it up. Pesce made two attempts, and aftonished the spectators by the time he remained under water; but in the third, it is thought he was caught by the whirlpool, as he never appeared more; and his body is faid to have been found some time afterwards near Tauromium (about thirty miles distant) it having been observed, that what is swallowed up by Charybdis is carried fouth by the current, and thrown out upon that coast. On the contrary, nothing wrecked here was ever carried through the Straits, or thrown out on the north fide of Sicily, unless we believe what Homer says of the thip of Ulysses.

We have been again to take a view of the Straits at this famous whirlpool, and are more and more convinced, that it must be infinitely diminished; indeed in comparison of what it was, almost reduced to nothing. The sea appeared to

have no extraordinary motion there, and ships and boats feemed to pass it with ease. When we compare this its present state, with the formidable description of so many antient authors, poets, historians, and philosophers, it appears indeed not improbable that this ifland has been torn from the continent by some violent convulsion, and that near to this fpot, huge caverns have been opened, which, drinking in the waters in one course of the current, and throwing them out in the other, may perhaps in fome measure account for the phænomena of Charybdis.-I find it is described both by Homer and Virgil, as alternately swallowing up, and throwing out every object that approached it. * Now, is it not probable, that these caverns in process of time have been, in a great measure, filled up by the immense quantities of rocks, fand, gravel, &c. that were perpetually carried in by the force of the current? -I own I am not quite fatisfied with this folution, but at present I cannot think of a better :- The fact, however, is certain, that it must have been a dreadful object even in Virgil's time, else he never would have made Eneas and his fleet perceive its effects at fo great a distance, and immediately run out to sea to avoid it; nor would he have made Helenus at fuch pains to caution him against that dangerous gulph, and advise him rather to make the whole tour of Sicily than attempt to pass it. Indeed, it is fo often mentioned both in the voyage of Aneas and Ulysses, and always in such frightful terms, that we cannot doubt of its having been a very terrible object +:

^{*} Dextrum Scylla latus, lævum implacata Charybd.s, Obsidet atque imo barathri ter gurgite vastos Sorbet in abruptum sluctus, rursusque sub auras Erigit alternos, et sidera verberat unda.

[†] Seneca gives this account of it in a letter to Lucillus: "Syllam saxum esse, et quidem terribile navigantibus optiume "scio;

After seeing the beautiful harbour of Messina. we have found nothing much worthy of notice in the city. Some of the churches are handsome, and there are a few tolerable paintings. One ceremony, from the account they give of it, I should like much to have feen: The celebration of the feast of Vara. It appears, indeed, to be a very fingular exhibition, and I am heartily forry it does not happen at this feason. In order to the more dignified appearance of the Virgin Mary on this occasion, they have invented a very curious machine, which I am told represents heaven, or at least a part of it. It is of a huge fize, and moves through the ffreet with vast pomp and ceremony. In the center is the principal figure, which represents the virgin; and, a little higher, there are three others to denote the Trinity. Round these, there are a number of wheels, said to be of a very curious confiruction. Every wheel contains a legion of angels, according to their different degrees of precedency; feraphims, che-

" scio; Charybdis an respondent fabulis perscribi mihi desidero,
fac nos certiores, utrum uno tantum vento agatur in vortices,
an omnis tampestas, ac mare illud contorquent, et an verum sit
quidquid illo freti terbine areptum est, &c."

And the following is a translation from Strabo.

- "Ante urbem Paululum in trajectu Charybdis oftenditur:
 "Profundum quidem immensum: Quo inundationes freti: mirum
 in modum newigia detrahunt: magnes per circumductiones et
 vor'ices precipitata, quibus absorptis, ac dissolutis; naufragiorum fragmenta ad Tauromitanum lictus attrahunter, &c.
- "Est igitur Charybdis (says Sallust) mare periculosum nautis; quod contrariis sluctuum cursibus, collisionem facit, etrapta quoque absorbet."
- But these are moderate indeed when compared to the descrip-

rubims, and powers. These are represented by a great number of beautiful little children, all glittering in clothes of gold and filver tiffue; with wings of painted feathers fixed to their shoulders. When the machine is fet in motion, all these wheels move round, and the different choirs of angels continue in a conflant flutter, finging Hallelujahs round the Trinity and the Virgin during the whole of the procession, and are said to make a most beautiful appearance. This is all I could learn of this fingular shew, neither were we admitted to fee the machine; conscious, I suppose, of the ridicule of which it is susceptible, they did not chuse to unveil so sacred an object to the eyes of hereticks.—This island has ever been famous for the celebration of its feasts even in antient as well as modern times. They spare no expence; as they have a large share both of superstition and invention, they never fail to produce fomething either very fine, or very ridiculous. The feast of St. Rosolia at Palermo is said to be the finest shew in Europe, and costs that city every year a large fum. They affure us there is more tafte and magnificence displayed in it, than in any thing of the kind in Italy; and advife us by all means to attend it, as it happens fome time near the middle of fummer, when we shall probably be in that end of the island.

If you please we shall now take leave of Meffina.—I did not expect to make so much out of it.—But it would not be fair neither; without at least putting you in mind of the great veneration it has ever been held in by the rest of Sicily, for the assistance it gave to Count Rugiero in freeing the island from the yoke of the Saracens; in consideration of which, great privileges were granted it by the succeeding Kings; some of which are

faid fill to remain. It was here that the Normans landed; and this city, by the policy of fome of its own inhabitants, was the first conquest they made; after which their victorious arms were foon extended over the whole island; aud a final period put to the Saracen tyranny. Count Rugiero fixed the feat of government at Palermo; and put the political fystem of the island upon a folid basis; of which the form (and the form alone) still remains to this day. He divided the whole island into three parts; one he gave to his officers, another to the church, and a third he referved for himself. Of these three branches he composed his parliament, that respectable body, of which the skeleton only now exists; for it has long ago lost all its blood, nerves, and animal spirits; and for many ages past has been reduced to a perfect caput mortuum. The fuperstitious tyranny of Spain has not only destroyed the national spirit of its own inhabitants, but likewise that of every other country which has fallen under its power. Adieu.

Ever your's.

P. S. Apropos! There is one thing I had almost forgot, and I never should have forgiven myself. Do you know, the most extraordinary phænomenon in the world is often observed near to this place? I laughed at it at first, as you will do; but I am now convinced of its reality; and am perfuaded too, that if ever it had been thoroughly examined by a philosophical eye, the natural cause must long ago have been assigned.

It has often been remarked, both by the antient and moderns, that in the heat of fummer, after the fea and air have been much agitated by winds, and a perfect calm fucceeds, there appears, about the time of dawn, in that part of the

heavens over the Straits, a great variety of fingular forms, fome at rest and some moving about with great velocity. These forms, in proportion as the light encreases, seem to become more aerial; till at last, some time before sun-rise, they entire-

The Sicilians represent this as the most beautiful fight in nature; Leanti, one of their latest and belt writers, came here on purpose to see it: He fays, the heavens appear crowded with a variety of objects: He mentions palaces, woods, gardens, &c. besides the figures of men, and other animals, that appear in motion amongst them. No doubt the imagination must be greatly aiding in forming this aerial creation; but as fo many of their authors, both antient and modern, agree in the fact, and give an account of it from their own observation, there certainly must be some foundation for the story. There is one Giardini, a Jesuit, who has lately written a treatise on this phænomenon, but I have not been able to find it. The celebrated Messinese Gallo has likewise; published something on this fingular subject; if I can procure either of them in the island, you shall have a more persect account of it. The common people, according to custom, give the whole merit to the devil; and indeed it is by much the shortest and easiest way of accounting for it: Those who pretend to be philosophers, and refuse him this honour, are greatly puzzled what to make of it. They think it may be owing to some uncommon refraction, or reflection of the rays, from the water of the Straus; which, as it is at that time carried about in a variety of eddies and vortexes, most consequently, fay they, make a variety of appearances on any medium where it is reflected. This, I think, is nonfenfe; or at least very near it; and till they can say more to the purpose, I think they had much better have left

left it in the hands of the old gentleman. I suspect it is something in the nature of our Aurora Borealis; and, like many of the great phænomena of nature, depends upon electrical causes; which, in suture ages, I have little doubt, will be sound to be as powerful an agent in regulating the universe, as gravity is in this age, or as the subtile

fluid was in the last.

The electrical fluid, in this country of volcanos, is probably produced in a much greater quantity than in any other. The air strongly impregnated with this matter, and confined betwixt two ridges of mountains; at the same time, exceedingly agitated from below, by the violence of the current, and the impetuous whirling of the waters; may it not be supposed to produce a variety of appearances? And may not the lively Sicilian imaginations, animated by a belief in dæmons, and all the wild off-spring of superstition, give these appearances as great a variety of forms? Remember, I do not fay it is fo; and hope yet to have it in my power to give you a better account of this matter. However if you should suppose me in this story, or in any future one I may tell you, to be inclined to the fabulous, you will please to remember, that I am now in the country of fable; this illand having given rife to more, perhaps, except Greece, than all the world beside. You have, therefore, only to fuppose that these regions are still contagious: and call to mind that mount Atna has ever been the great mother of monflers and chimeras both in the antient and the modern world. However, I shall, if possible, keep free of the infection, and entertain you only with such subjects as fall under my own observation. But indeed, from what I have already heard of that wonderful mountain, the most moderate account of it would appear highly fabulous to all fuch as are unacquainted with objects of this

this kind. Adieu. We think of fetting off tomorrow by day-break. I am forry it has not been a florm, that we might have had a chance of feeing Pandemonium reared over our heads, and all the devils at work around it.

I shall leave this to be fent by the first post, and shall write you again from Catania, if we escape

unhurt from all the perils of Ætna. Adieu.

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Giardini, near Taurominum, May 22d.

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out in any other. The art drivente more read ing to me the discountries and confidence in the confidence in the

WE have had a delightful journey, and if all Sicily be but as agreeable, we shall not repent of our expedition. We left Messina early this morning, with fix mules for ourselves and servants, and two for our baggage. This train, I affure you, makes no contemptible appearance; particularly when you call to mind our front and rear guard; by much the most conspicuous part of it. These are two great drawcanfir figures, armed cap-apie, with a broad hanger, two enormous pistols, and a long arquebuse: This they kept cock'd and ready for action in all suspicious places; where they recounted abundance of wonderful stories of robberies and murders; some of them with such very minute circumstances, that I am fully perfuaded they themselves were the principal actors. However, I look upon our fituation as perfectly fecure; they pay us great respect, and take the utmost pains that we fhall

simpose upon every body except us; for they tax the bills according to their pleasure; and such cheap ones I never paid before. To-day's dinnered for eleven men (our three muletteers included) and feeding for ten mules and horses, did not amount to half a guinea. And, although we pay them high, in (an ounce a day each) yet I am persuaded they save us at least one half of it on our bills. They enterstained us with some of their seats, and make not feruple of owning their having put several people to death; but add, "Mas tutti, tutti honorabile "menta,"—That is to say, they did not do it in and dastardly manner, nor without just provocation, and the

The fea-coast of Sicily is very rich; the fides of fome of the mountains are highly cultivated, and present the most agreeable aspect that can be imagined; -corn, wine, oil, and filk, all mixed together, and in the greatest abundance: However, the cultivated part is but fmall in proportion to what is lying wafte, and only ferves to flew the great fertility of this island, were it peopled, and in industrious hands. The fides of the road are covered with a variety of flowers and of flowering thrubs fome of them exceedingly beautiful. The inclosures are many of them fenced with hedges of the Indian fig, or prickly pear; as in Spain or Portugal; and our guides affure us, that in many of the parched ravines round Aina, there are plenty of trees which produce both cinnamon and pepper; not so firong, they allow, as those of the spice islands, but which are fold to the merchants at a low price, by a fet of banditti, who drefs themselves like hermits? These spices are mixed with the true pepper and cinnamon from the Indies, and fent over all Eucalled Chrylothous It is lead, the remains of tisqor

The road from Messina to this place is extremely romantic. It lies the whole way along the coast.

coast, and commands the view of Calabria, and the fouth part of the Straits; covered with chebecks, gallies, galliots, and a quantity of fishing boats. The view on the right-hand is confined by high mountains, on the very fummits of which they have built feveral confiderable towns and villages, which with their churches and steeples, make a very picturefque appearance. They have chosen this elevated fituation, I suppose, with a double view; to protect them both from their enemies, and from the violent heat of the climate: This forenoon we found it excessive, but had the finest swimming in the world before dinner; which kept us cool and fresh for all the rest of the day. We have besides provided ourselves with umbrellas, without which, at this feafon,

travelling would be impracticable.

Betwixt this place and Messina, a little to the right lie the mountains, formerly called the Nebrodes; and likewise the mountain of Neptune, which is reckoned the highest of that chain. It is celebrated for a gulph or crater on its fummit, from whence, at particular times, there iffues an exceeding cold wind, with fuch violence that it is difficult to approach it. I was forry to pass this fingular mountain, but it would have delayed us a day or two to vifit it; and we are haftening with impatience to a much greater object. It is now named Il monte Scuderio, and is faid to be fo high that the Adriatic can be feen from its fummit. From the description they give of it, it appears evidently to be an old volcano. The Nisso takes its rife from this mountain; a river renowned in antiquity for the gold found in its channel; for which reason it was by the Greeks called Chrysothoas. It is said, the remains of the antient gold-mines are still to be feen near the fource of this river; but the modern masters of E 2

Sicily have, never been enterprifing enough to explore them. It was on this charming coast, where the flocks of Apollo were kept by his daughters, Phæthusa and Lampetie; the seizing of which by Ulysses' companions, proved the cause of their deaths, and of all his subsequent missortunes. The mountain of Tauromina is very high and steep,

and the road up to it exceedingly rugged.

This once famous city is now reduced to an mfignificant burgh; yet even these small remains give a high idea of its former magnificence. The theatre, I think, is accounted the largest in the world. It appears to me greatly superior to that of Adrian's villa, near Rome. It is entire enough to give a very tolerable idea of the Roman theatre, and indeed aftonishes by its vastness; nor can I conceive how any voice could extend through the prodigious number of people it must have contained. I paced about one quarter of it; over the boxes that were intended for the women, which is not near the outward circle of all; the rest is so broken, that I could get no farther. It measured about 120 ordinary steps, so that you may conceive the greatness of the whole. The feats from mount Ætna, which makes a glorious appearance from this place; and no doubt has often diverted their attention from the fcepe. It arises from an immense base, and mounts equally on all fides to its fummit: It is just now throwing out volumes of white smoke, which do not rife in the air, but feem to roll down the fide of the mountain like a vast torrent. The ascent of Ætna on each fide is computed at about 30 miles, and the circumference of its base at 150; I think it does not appear to be fo much; but I shall probably be enabled to give you a fuller account of it afterwards.

After admiring the great theatre of Taurominum, we went to examine the Naumachia, and

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the refervoirs for supplying it with water. About 150 paces of one fide of the wall of the Naumachia remains; but as this is not complete, there is no judging of its original dimensions. This is supposed to have been a large square, inclosed with ftrong walls, and capable of being filled with water on occasion; intended for the exhibition of fea-fights, and all naval exercises: There were four refervoirs for supplying this with water. All are upon the same grand scale. One of these is almost entire; it is supported by a great number of ftrong pillars in the fame manner as those of Titus' baths at Rome, and feveral others you may have seen in Italy.—I would dwell longer on objects of this kind, but I am perfuaded description can give but a very imperfect idea of them; and to mark out the precise dimensions with a mathematical exactness, where there is nothing very remarkable, must furely be but a dry work, both to the writer and reader. I shall therefore content myself (I hope it will content you too) with endeavouring to communicate, as entire as poffible, the fame impression I myself shall receive, without descending too much to particulars, or fatiguing myself or you with the mensuration of antique walls, merely because they are such, except where there is indeed fomething very firiking, and different too, from what has already been described in Italy.

I own I despair of success: Few things I believe in writing being more difficult than thus s'emparer "de l'imagination," to seize,—to make ourselves masters of the reader's imagination, to carry it along with us through every scene, and make it in a manner congenial with our own; every prospect opening upon him with the same light, and arising in the same colours, and at the same instant too, as upon us: For where descriptions

fail in this, the pleasure of reading them must be very trivial. Now, perhaps, this same journal stile is the most savourable of any to produce these effects. It is at least the most agreeable to the writer; who never has his subject to seek, but needs only recollect what has passed since he last laid down the pen, and travel the day over again; and if he travels it to good purpose, it ought to be equally agreeable to the reader too, who thereby becomes one of the party, and bears a share in all the pleasures of the journey without suffering

from the fatigues of it.

One of my greatest difficulties, I fee, will be the finding proper places to write in, for the inns are altogether execrable, and there is no fuch thing as getting a room to one's felf: I am just now writing on the end of a barrel, which I chose rather than the table, as it is farther removed from noise. I must therefore intreat you, once for all, to excuse incorrectness and want of method. How can one be methodical upon a barrel!—It has ever been the most declared enemy to method. You might as well expect a fermon from Bacchus, or a coherent speech from our friend lord — after he had finished the third bottle. You will be pleafed then just to take things as they occur. Were I obliged to be strictly methodical, I should have no pleasure in writing you these letters; and then, if my position is just, you could have no pleasure in reading them.

Our guards have procured us beds; though not in the town of Taurominum, but in Giardini, a village at the foot of the mountain on which it stands. The people are extremely attentive, and have produced us an excellent supper and good wine, which now waits—but shall wait no longer. Adieu. To-morrow we intend to clime Mount Ætna on this (its east) side, if we find it practicable.

Ever your's.

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Cian and SRIvine pleasure of reaching them much he Tre Tor E RI VIII file is the mode face trable of the to produce

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ded Asst or worden and and Catania, May 24th.

I AM already almost two days in arrears. Yesterday we were fo much fatigued with the abominable roads of mount Ætna, that I was not able to wield a pen; and to-day I affure you, has by no means been a day of rest; however, I must not delay any longer, otherwise I shall never be able to make up my lee-way. I am afraid you will fuffer more from the fatigues of the journey than I at first apprehended.

We lest Giardini at five o'clock. About half a mile farther the first region of mount Ætna begins, and here they have fet up the flatue of a faint, for having prevented the lava from running up the mountain of Taurominum, and destroying the adjacent country; which the people think it certainly must have done, had it not been for this kind interpolition, but he very wifely, as well as humanely, conducted it down a

low valley to the fea.

We left the Catania road on the left, and began to ascend the mountain, in order to visit the celebrated tree, known by the name of Il Castagno de Cento Cavalli (The chesnut tree of an hundred horse;) which for some centuries past has been looked upon as one of the greatest wonders of Atma. We had likewise proposed, if possible, to gain the summit of the mountain by this side and to descend by the side of Catania; but we were foon convinced of the impossibility of this, and obliged, with a good deal of reluctance, to relinquish that part of our scheme. " soil book has

As we advanced in the first region of Ætna, we observed that there had been eruptions of fire all

over

over this country at a great distance from the summit, or principal crater of the mountain. On our road to the villages of Piedmonte, I took notice of several confiderable craters; and stones of a large fize, fcattered all around, that had been difcharged from them. These stones are precisely fuch as are thrown out of the crater of mount Vefuvius; and indeed the lava too feems to be of the

fame nature, though rather more porous.

The distance from Giardini to Piedmonte is only ten miles, but as the road is exceedingly rough and difficult, we took near four hours to travel it. The barometer, which at Giardini (on the fea fide) flood at 29 inches ten lines, had now fallen to 27: 3. Farenheit's thermometer, made by Mr. Adams in London, 73 degrees. We found the people extremely curious and inquisitive to know our errand, which when we told, many of them offered to accompany us. Of these we chose two; and after drinking our tea, which was matter of great speculation to the inhabitants, who had never before feen a breakfast of this kind, we began to climb the mountain.

We directed for five or fix miles of our road by an aqueduct, which the prince of Palagonia has made at a great expence, to supply Piedmonte with water. After we left the aqueduct, the afcent became a good deal more rapid, till we arrived at the beginning of the fecond region, called by the native la Regione Sylvosa, or the woody region, because it is composed of one vast forest, that extends all around the mountain. Part of this was destroyed by a very fingular event, not later than the year 1755.—During an eruption of the volcano, an immense torrent of boiling water issued, as is imagined, from the great crater of the mountain, and in an instant poured down to its base; overwhelming and ruining every thing

thing it met with in its course. Our conductors shewed us the traces of this torrent, which are still very visible; but are now beginning to recover verdure and vegetation, which for some time appeared to have been lost, the track it has left, seems to be about a mile and a half broad; and in

fome places still more.

The common opinion, I find, is, that this water was raised by the power of suction, thro' some communication betwixt the volcano and the fea; the abfurdity of which is too glaring to need a refutation. The power of fuction alone, even suppoling a perfect vacuum, could never raise water to more than thirty-three or thirty-four feet, which is equal to the weight of a column of the air the whole height of the atmosphere. But this circumstance, I should imagine, might be easily enough accounted for; either by a fiream of lava falling fuddenly into one of the vallies of fnow, that occupy the higher regions of the mountain, and melting it down: or, what I think is still more probable, that the melted fnow, finding vast caverns and refervoirs in the mountain, where it is lodged for fome time, till the excessive heat of the lava below burst the sides of these caverns, produces this phænomenon, which has been matter of great speculation to the Sicilian philosophers, and has employed the pens of feveral of them. The same thing happened in an eruption of Vefuvius last century, and in an instant swept away about 500 people, who were marching in procession at the foot of the mountain, to implore the mediation of St. Januarius.

Near to this place we passed through some beautiful woods of cork and ever-green oak, growing absolutely out of the lava, the soil having as yet hardly filled the crevices of that porous substance; and not a great way farther, I observed several feveral little mountains that seemed to have been formed by a late eruption. I dismounted from my mule, and climbed to the top of them all. They are seven in number; every one of them with a regular cup or crater on the top, and in some the great gulph or (as they call it) Voraigne, that had discharged the burnt matter of which these little mountains are formed, is still open. I tumbled stones down into these gulphs, and heard the noise for a long time after. All the fields round to a considerable distance, are covered with large burnt stones discharged from these little volcanos.

From this place, it is not less than five or fix miles to the great chefuut-trees, through forests growing out of the lava, in feveral places almost impassable. Of these trees there are many of an enormous fize; but the Castagno de Cento Cavalli is by much the most celebrated. I have even found it marked in an old map of Sicily, published near an hundred years ago; and in all the maps of Atna, and its invirons, it makes a very confpicuous figure. I own I was by no means ftruck with its appearance, as it does not feem to be one tree, but a bush of five large trees growing together. We complained to our guides of the imposition; when they unanimously affured us. that by the universal tradition and even testimony of the country, all these were once united in one stem; that their grand fathers remembered this, when it was looked upon as the glory of the forest, and visited from all quarters; that for many years past it had been reduced to the venerable ruin we beheld. We began to examine it with more attention, and found that there was indeed an appearance as if these five trees had really been once united in one. The . opening in the middle is at prefent prodigious; and it does indeed require faith to believe, that so vast a space

there is no appearance of bark on the infide of any of the stumps, nor on the fide that are opposite to one another. Mr. Glover and I measured it separately, and brought it exactly to the same size; viz. 204 feet round. If this was once united in one folid stem, it must with justice indeed have been looked upon as a very wonderful phænomenon in the vegetable world, and was deserved-

ly stiled "the glory of the forest."

I have fince been told by the Canonico Recupero, an ingenious ecclefiaftic of this place, that he was at the expence of carrying up peasants with tools to dig round the Castagno de Cento Cavalli, and he affures me, upon his honour, that he found all these stems united below ground in one root. I alledged that fo extraordinary an object must have been mentioned by many of their writers. He told me that it had, and produced feveral examples; Philoteo, Carrera, and fome others. Carrera begs to be excused from telling its dimensions, but fays, he is fure there was wood enough in that one tree to build a large palace. Their poet Bagolino too has celebrated a tree of the same kind, perhaps the same tree*; and Massa, one of their most esteemed authors, says he has feen folid oaks upwards of 40 feet round; but adds, that the fize of the chefnut-trees was beyond belief, the hollow of one of which, he fays, contained 300 sheep; and 30 people on horseback had often been in it at a time. I shall not pretend to fay, that this is the fame tree he means; or whether it ever was one tree or not. There are many others that are well deferving the curiofity of travellers.

^{*} Supremos inter montes monstrossor omni Monstross fætum stipitis Ætna dedit, Castaneam genuit, cujus modo concava cortex Turmam equitum haud parvum continet, atque greges, &c.

One of these about a mile and a half higher on the mountain, is called It Castagno del Galea; it rises from one solid stem to a considerable height, after which it branches out, and is a much siner object than the other. I measured it about two seet from the ground, and sound it 76 seet round. There is a third called It Castagno del Nava, that is pretty nearly of the same size. All these grow on a thick rich soil, sormed originally, I believe, of ashes thrown out by the mountain.

The climate here is much more temperate than in the first region of Ætna, where the excessive heats must ever prevent a very luxuriant vegetation. I found the barometer had now fallen to 26:5; which announces an elevation of very near four thousand feet: equivalent in the opinion of some of the French academicans, to 18 or 20 degrees of latitude in the formation of a cli-

mate. Term must be been disched bucons or

The vast quantity of nitre contained in the ashes of Ætna, probably contributes greatly to increase the luxuriance of this vegetation; and the air too, strongly impregnated with it from the smoke of the volcano, must create a constant supply of this falt, termed by some, not without reason, the food

of vegetables. And our distribution of society

Manada (190)

There is the ruins of a house in the inside of the great chesnut tree which has been built for holding the fruit it bears, which is still considerable: here we dined with excellent appetite, and being convinced, that it was in vain to attempt getting to the top of the mountain on that side, we began to descend; and after a very fatiguing journey over old lavas, now become fertile sields and rich vineyards, we arrived about sunset at faci Reale, where, with no small dissipulty, we at last got lodging in a convent of Dominicans.

William The

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The last lava we crossed before our arrival there, is of a vast extent, I thought we never should have had done with it; it certainly is not less than fix or seven miles broad, and appears in many

places to be of an enormous depth.

When we came near the fea, I was defirous to fee what form it had affirmed in meeting with the water. I went to examine it, and found it had driven back the waves for upwards of a mile, and had formed a large black high promontory, where, before it was deep water. This lava, I imagined, from its barrenness, for it is as yet covered with a very scanty soil, had run from the mountain only a few ages ago; but was surprized to be informed by Signor Recupero, the historiographer of Ætna, that this very lava is mentioned by Diodorus Siculus to have burst from Ætna in the time of the fecond Punic war, when Syracuse was besieged by the Romans. A detachment was fent from Taurominum to the relief of the befieged. They were stopped on their march by this stream of lava, which having reached the fea before their arrival at the foot of the mountain, had cut off their pallage; and obliged them to return by the back of Ætna, upwards of 100 miles about. His authority for this, he tells me, was taken from inscriptions on Roman monuments found on this lava, and that it was likewife well afcertained by many of the old Sicilian authors. Now as this is about 2000 years ago, one would have imagined, if lavas have a regular progress in becoming fertile fields, that this must long ago have become at least arable; this however is not the case, and it is as yet only covered with a very scanty vegetation, and incapable of producing either corn or vines. There are indeed pretty large trees growing in the crevices, which are full of a rich earth, but in all probability it will be some hundred

dred years yet, before there is enough of it to render this land of any use to the proprietors.

It is curious to confider, that the furface of this black and barren matter, in process of time, becomes one of the most fertile foils upon earth: But what must be the time to bring it to its utmost persection, when after 2000 years it is still in most places but a barren rock?—Its progress is posibly as follows. The lava being a very porous fubstance, easily catches the dust that is carried about by the wind; which, at first, I observe only yields a kind of moss; this rotting, and by degrees increasing the foil, some small meagre vegetables are next produced; which rotting in their turn, are likewise converted into soil. But this progress, I suppose, is often greatly accelerated by showers of ashes from the mountain, as I have observed in some places the richest soil, to the depth of five or fix feet and upwards; and fill below that, nothing but rocks of lava. It is in these spots that the trees arrive at such an immense fize. Their roots shoot into the crevices of the lava, and lay such hold of it, that there is no instance of the winds tearing them up; tho' there are many, of its breaking off their largest branches. A branch of one of the great chefnut trees, where we passed yesterday, has fallen across a deep gully, and formed a very commodious bridge over the rivulet below. The people fay it was done by St. Agatha, the guardian faint of the mountain, who has the superintendance of all its operations.

In the lowest part of the first region of Altna, the harvest is almost over; but in the upper parts of the same region, near the confines of the Regione Sylvofa, it will not begin for feveral weeks.

The reapers, as we went along, abused us from all quarters, and more excellent black-guards I have never met with; but indeed, our guides

were a full match for them. They began as foon as we were within hearing, and did not finish till we were got quite without reach of their voices; which they extended as much as they could. As it was all in Sicilian, we could make but very little of it, but by the interpretation of our guides; bowever we could not help admiring the volubility and natural elocution with which they spoke. This custom is as old as the time of the Romans. and probably much older, as it is mentioned by Horace, and others, of their authors. It is still in vogue here as much as ever; the masters encourage it; they think it gives them spirits, and makes the work go on more chearfully; and I believe they are right, for it is amazing what pleasure they seemed to take in it, and what laughing and merriment it occasioned.

I forgot to mention that we passed the source of the famous cold river (Il fiume Freddo). This is the river so celebrated by the poets in the fable of Acis and Galatea. It was here that Acis was fupposed to have been killed by Polyphemus, and the gods out of compassion converted him into this river; which, as still retaining the terrour infpired by the dreadful voice of the Cyclops, runs with great rapidity, and about a mile from its fource throws itself into the sea. It rises, at once out of the earth a large stream. Its water is remarkably pure, and so extremely cold, that it is reckoned dangerous to drink it: but I am told it has likewise a poisonous quality, which proceeds from its being impregnated with vitriol; to fuch a degree, that cattle have often been killed by it. It never freezes; but, what is remarkable, it is faid often to contract a degree of cold greater than that

of ice.

These particulars I was informed of by the priest of Aci; which place, antiently called Aci Aquileia,

Aquileia, and several others near it, Aci Castello, Aci Terra, &c. take their names from the unfor-

tunate shepherd Acis.

A little to the east of the river Acis, is the mouth of the river Alcantara, one of the most confiderable in the island. It takes its rise on the north fide of mount Ætna, and marks out the boundry of the mountain for about 60 miles. Its course has been stopped in many places, by the eruptions of the volcano; fo that strictly speaking, the skirts of Ætna extend much beyond it; though it has generally been confidered as the boundary. We passed it on our way to Piedmonte, over a large bridge built entirely of lava; and near to this the bed of the river is continued for a great way, though one of the most remarkable, and probably one of the most antient lavas that ever run from Ætna. In many places the current of the river, which is extremely rapid, has worn down the folid lava to the depth of 50 or 60 feet. Recupero, the gentleman I have mentioned, who is engaged in writing the natural history of Ætna, tells me, he had examined this lava with great attention, and he thinks that its course, including all its windings, is not less than 40 miles. It issued from a mountain on the north fide of Ætna, and finding fome valleys that lay to the east, it took its course that way; interrupting the Alcantara in many places, and at last arrived at the sea not far from the mouth of that river.

The city of Jaci or Aci, and indeed all the towns on this coast, are founded on immense rocks of lava, heaped one above another, in some places to an amazing height; for it appears that these flaming torrents, as foon as they arrived at the fea, were hardened into rock, which not yielding any longer to the preffure of the liquid fire behind, the melted matter continuing to accumulate, formed a dam of fire, which, in a fhort time, run over the folid front, pouring a fecond torrent into the ocean: this was immediately confolidated, and fucceeded by a third, and fo on.

Many of the places on this coast still retain their antient names; but the properties ascribed to them by the antients are now no more. The river Acis, which is now fo poisonous, was of old celebrated for the fweetness and solubrity of its waters *; which Theocritus fays, were ever

held facred by the Sicilian shepherds.

We were furprized to find that so many places retained the name of this swain, who I imagined had never existed, but in the imagination of the poets: But the Sicilian authors fay, that Acis was the name of a king who reigned in this part of the island, in the time of the most remote antiquity; in confirmation of which, Massa gives the translation of an inscription found near Aci Castello. He is faid to have been flain in a fit of jealousy by Poliphemus, one of the giants of Ætna; which gave rife to the fable. Auguillara, a Sicilian poet, in relating this story, gives a tremendous idea of the voice of Poliphemus; the passage has been greatly admired.

* Quique per Ætnæos Acis petit æquora fines, Et dulce gratum Nereide, perluit unda.

SIL. ITAL.

" E Pacchino, e Peloro, e Lilibeo

You will observe, however, that the Sicilian poet cannot in justice claim the entire merit of thefe

[&]quot;Tremo per troppo horrore Ætna; e Tifeo " Fece maggior la fiammo uscir del monte;

[&]quot; Quasi attuffar nel mar l'altera fronte; " Cadde il martel di man nel monte Ætneo, " All Re di Lenno, a Sterope, e a Bronte; " Fugir siere & augei di lor ricetto

[&]quot; E si strinse ogni madre il figlio al Petto."

these lines, as they are evidently borrowed from Virgil's description of the sound of the sury Alecto's horn, in the 7th æneid. The last line, perhaps the most beautiful of the whole, is almost word for word.

" Et trepidæ matres pressere ad pectora natos."

DIÆ

OGNIÆ, SATURNIÆ, ÆTNÆÆ,

DEORUM,

MARTI, FILIÆ, UXORI,

IN PORTU

SEPULCHRUM, TEMPLUM, ET ARCEM

ACIS,

FAUNI FILIUS, PICI NEPOS,

SATURNI PRONEPOS,

LATINI FRATER.

It has been observed too, by some critics, that even this description of Virgil is not his own, but copied from the account that Apollonius Rhodius gives of the roaring of the dragon that guarded the golden sleece; so that you see there is nothing new under the sun. Rhodius probably stole it from somebody else, and so on. Poets have ever been the greatest of all thieves, and happy it is, that poetical thest is no selony; otherwise I am asraid, Parnassus would have been but thinly peopled.

Farewel; to-morrow I shall endeavour to bring you up with us, for at present you will please to obferve,

ferve, that you have got no farther than the city of Jaci; and have still many extinguished volcanos to pass before your arrival here.

Ever your's, &c.

L E T T E R VII.

Catania, May 25th.

I HE road from Jaci to this city is entirely over lava, and confequently very fatiguing and troublesome. Within a few miles of that place, we counted eight mountains formed by eruption, with every one his crater, from whence the burnt matter was discharged. Some of these are very high, and of a great compass. It appears evidently, that the eruptions of mount Ætna have formed the whole of this coast, and in many places have driven back the fea for feveral miles from its antient boundary. The account the Sicilian authors give of the conflict betwixt these two adverse elements is truly tremendous; and in relating it, they feem to have been shaken with horror. Conceive the front of a torrent of fire, ten miles in breadth, and heaped up to an enormous height, rolling down the mountain; and pouring its flames into the ocean! The noise, they affure us, is infinitely more dreadful than the loudest thunder; and is heard through the whole F 2

country to an immense distance. The water seemed to retire and diminish before the fire; and to confess its superiority; yielding up its possessions, and contracting its banks, to make room for its imperious mafter, who commands it: "Thus far " shalt thou come, and no further." The clouds of falt vapour darken the face of the fun, covering up this scene, under a veil of horror and of night; and laying waste every field and vineyard in these regions of the island. The whole fish on the coast are destroyed, the colour of the sea itfelf is changed, and the transparency of its waters loft for many months.

There are three rocks of lava at some little distance from shore, which Pliny takes frequent notice of, and calls them the Three Cyclops. It is pretty fingular, that they are fill diffin-

guished by the name.

The fate of Catania has been very remarkable, and will ever appear fabulous. It is fituated immediately at the foot of this great volcano, and has been feveral times destroyed by it: That indeed is not extraordinary; it would have been much more so had it escaped: but what I am going to relate, is a fingularity that probably never happened to any city but itself. It was always in great want of a port, till by an eruption in the 16th century; and no doubt, by the interposition of St. Agatha, what was denied them by nature, they received from the generofity of the mountain. A stream of lava, running into the fea, formed a mole which no expence could have furnished them. This lasted for some time a fafe and commodious harbour, till at laft, by a fubsequent eruption, it was entirely filled up and demolished; so that probably the poor faint had much funk in her credit. For at this unfortunate period, her miraculous veil, looked upon as the greatest treasure of Catania, and esteemed an infallible

fallible remedy against earthquakes and volcanos, feems to have lost its virtue. The torrent burst over the walls, fweeping away the images of every faint that were placed there to oppose it; and laying waste great part of this beautiful city, poured into the fea. However, the people fay, that at that time they had given their faint very just provocation, but that she has long ago been reconciled to them; and has promifed never to fuffer the mountain to get the better of them for the future. Many of them are fo thoroughly convinced of this (for they are fo extremely fuperflitious) that I really believe if the lava were at their walls, they would not be at the pains to remove their effects. Neither is it the veil of St. Agatha alone, that they think possessed of this wonderful dominion over the mountain; but every thing that has touched that piece of facred attire, they suppose is impregnated in a lesser degree with the fame miraculous properties. Thus there are a number of little bits of cotton and linen fixed to the veil; which, after been bleffed by the bishop, are supposed to acquire power enough to fave any person's house or garden; and where ever this expedient has failed, it is always ascribed to the want of faith of the person, not any want of efficacy in the veil. However, they tell you many stories of these bits of cotton being fixed to the walls of houses and vineyards, and proferving them entirely from the conflagration.

On our arrival at Catania, we were amazed to find, that in so noble and beautiful a city, there was no such thing as an inn. Our guides indeed, conducted us to a house they called such; but it was so wretchedly mean and dirty, that we were obliged to look out for other lodgings; and by the assistance of the Canonico Recupero, for whom

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we had letters, we foon found ourselves comfortably lodged in a convent. The prince of Biscaris (the governor of the place) a person of very great merit, and distinction, returned our visit this forenoon, and made us the most obliging offers.

Signor Recupero, who obligingly engages to be our Cicerone, has shewn us some curious remains of antiquity; but they have been all so shaken and shattered by the mountain, that hardly any

thing is to be found entire.

Near to a vault, which is now thirty feet below ground, and has probably been a burial-place there, is a draw well, where there are feveral strata of lavas, with earth to a confiderable thickness over the furface of each stratum. Recupero has made use of this as an argument to prove the great antiquity of the eruptions of this mountain, For if it requires two thousand years or upwards, to form but a feanty foil on the surface of a lava, there must have been more than that space of time betwixt each of the eruptions which have formed these strata. But what shall we say of a pit they funk near to Jaci, of a great depth. They pierced through feven distinct lavas one under the other, the furfaces of which were parallel, and most of them covered with a thick bed of rich earth. Now, fays he, the eruption which formed the lowest of these lavas, if we may be allowed to reason from analogy, must have slowed from the mountain at least 14,000 years ago.

Recupero tells me he is exceedingly embarraffed, by these discoveries, in writing the history of
the mountain.—That Moses hangs like a dead
weight upon him, and blunts all his zeal for inquiry; for that really he has not the conscience
to make his mountain so young, as that prophet
makes the world.—What do you think of these

fentiments

fentiments from a Roman Catholic divine?——The bishop, who is strenuously orthodox—for it is an excellent see—has already warned him to be upon his guard: and not to pretend to be a better natural historian than Moses; nor to prefume to urge any thing that may in the smallest degree be deemed contradictory to his facred authority. Adieu.

Ever your's.

L E T T E R VIII.

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Consider Constitution

Catania, May 26th.

I HIS morning we went to fee the house and museum of the prince of Biscaris; which, in antiques, is inferior to none I have ever feen, except that of the king of Naples at Portici. What adds greatly to the value of these, is, that the prince himself has had the satisfaction of seeing most of them brought to light. He has dug them out of the ruins of the ancient theatre of Catania, at an incredible expence; but happily his pains have been amply repaid, by the number and variety of curious objects he has discovered. It would be endless to enter into an enumeration of them; even during our short stay, we had the satisfaction of feeing part of a rich Corinthian cornice, and feveral pieces of statues, produced again to the light after lying for fo many ages in darkness and oblivion. His collection of medals, cameios, and intaglios is likewise very princely, and so are the articles in natural history; but the polite

polite and amiable behaviour of the owner, gives more pleasure than all his curiofities. He did not, oftentatiously, like the prince of Villa Franca, tell us, that his house and carriages were at our command; but without any hint being given of it, we found his coach waiting at our door; and we shall probably be obliged to make use of it during our stay. His family consists of the princess his wife, a fon, and a daughter, who feem to emulate each other in benignity. They put me in mind of some happy families I have seen in our own country, but refemble nothing we have yet met with on the continent. He is just now building a curious villa on a promontory formed by the lava of 1669. The spot where the house stands was formerly at least 50 feet deep of water; and the height of the lava above the prefent level of the fea, is not less than 50 more.

This afternoon I walked out alone to examine the capricious forms and fingular appearances that this destructive branch has assumed in laying waste the country. I had not gone far when I fpied a magnificent building at some distance, which feemed to fland on the highest part of it. My curiofity lead me on, as I had heard no mention of any palace on this fide of the city. On entring the great gate, my furprise was a good deal increased on observing a facade almost equal to that of Verfailles; a noble staircase of white marble, and every thing that announced a royal magnificence. I had never heard that the kings of Sicily had a palace at Catania, and yet I could not account for what I saw in any other way. I thought the vast front before me had been the whole of the palace; but conceive my amazement, when on turning the corner, I found another front of equal greatness; and discovered that what I had feen was only one fide of a square.

I was

I was no longer in doubt, well knowing that the church alone could be mistress of such magnificence. I hastened home to communicate this discovery to my friends; when I found the Canonico Recupero already with them. He abused me exceedingly for presuming to go out without our Cicerone, and declared he had never been so much disappointed in his life; as he had come on purpose to carry us there, and to enjoy our surprize and assonishment. He then told us, that it was no other than a convent of sat Benedictine monks; who were determined to make sure of a paradise, at least in this world, if not in the other. He added, that they were worth about 15,000l. a year; an immense sum indeed for this

country.

We went with Recupero to pay our respects to these sons of humility, temperance and mortification; and we must own, they received and entertained us with great civility and politeness, and even without oftentation. Their museum is little inferior to that of the prince of Biscaris, and the apartments that contain it are much more magnificent. But their garden is the greatest curiofity: Although it be formed on the rugged and barren surface of the lava, it has a variety and a neatness seldom to be met with. The walks are broad, and paved with flints; and the trees and hedges (which by the bye are in a bad taste, and cut in a number of ridiculous shapes) thrive exceedingly. The whole foil must have been brought from a great distance, as the surface of this lava (only 150 years old) is as hard and bare as a piece of iron. The church belonging to this convent, if finished, would be one of the finest in Europe; but as it is founded on the furface of the porous and brittle lava, part of the foundation has given way to the pressure of so huge a fabric: and several

weral of the large arches that were intended to form the different chapels, have already fallen down. Only the west limb of the cross (not a fifth of the whole) is finished; and even this alone makes a very fine church. Here they have the finest organ I ever heard, even superior I

think, to that at Harlem.

We went next to examine where the lava had fealed the walls of Catania. It must have been a noble fight. The walls are 64 palms high (near 60 feet) and of a great strength; otherwise they must have been borne down by the force of the flaming matter which rose over this height, and feems to have mounted confiderably above the top of the wall before it made its entry; at last it came down, sweeping before it every faint in the calendar, who were drawn up in order of batthe on purpose to oppose its passage; and marching on in triumph, annihilated, in a manner, every object that dared to oppose it. Amongst other things, it covered up some fine mountains; one of which was fo much effeemed, that they have at a great expence pierced through the lava, and have now recovered their favourite spring. This excavation is a very curious work, and worthy of the attention of travellers.

Catania is looked upon as one of the most antient cities in the island, or indeed in the world—Their legends bear, that it was founded by the Cyclops, or giants of Ætna, supposed to have been the first inhabitants of Sicily after the deluge; and some of the Sicilian writers pretend that it was built by Deucalion and Pyrrha, as soon as the waters subsided, and they had got down again to the soot of the mountain. Its antient name

was Catema, or the city of Atna.

It is now reckoned the third city in the kingdom; though fince Messina was destroyed by the plague, plague, it may well be confidered as the fecond. It contains upwards of 30,000 inhabitants; has an univerfity, the only one in the island; and a bishoprick. The bishop's revenues are considerable, and rife principally from the fale of the fnow on Mount Ætna. One small portion of which, lying on the north of the mountain, is faid to bring him in upwards of 1000l. a year; for Ætna furnishes snow and ice, not only to the whole island of Sicily, but likewise to Malta and a great part of Italy, and makes a very confiderable branch of commerce; for even the peasants in these hot countries, regale themselves with ices during the fummer heats; and there is no entertainment given by the nobility, of which these do not always make a principal part: a famine of fnow, they themselves say, would be more grievous, than a famine of either corn or wine. It is a common observation amongst them, that without the fnows of mount Atna, their island could not be inhabited; fo effential has this article of luxury become to them. But Ætna, not only keeps them cool in fummer, but likewife keeps them warm in winter; the fuel for the greatest part of the island being carried from the immense and inexhaustible forests of this volcano, and conflitutes too, a very large branch of commerce.— But this amazing mountain perpetually carries me away from my fubject; I was speaking of this city.—What of it was spared by the eruption 1669, was totally ruined by the fatal earthquake 1693; when the greatest part of its inhabitants were buried under the walls of their houses and churches. Yet, after fuch repeated, and fuch difmal difasters, so strange is their infatuation, that they never could be prevailed upon to change their fituation. The whole city was foon rebuilt, after a new and an elegant plan, and is now much

much handsomer than ever. There is scarce any doubt, that in some future commotion of the mountain, it will be again laid in ashes. But at present they are in persect security: The Virgin and St. Agatha have both engaged to protect them; and under their banner they hold Ætna, with all

the devils it contains, at defiance.

There are many remains of antiquity in this city, but indeed most of them are in a very ruinous state. One of the most remarkable is an elephant of lava, with an obelisk of Egyptian granite on his back. There are likewise considerable remains of a great theatre, besides the one belonging to the prince of Biscaris; a large bath almost entire; the ruins of the great aqueduct, 18 miles long; the ruins of several temples, one of Ceres, another of Vulcan: The church called Bocca di Fuoco was likewise a temple. But the most entire of all, is a small rotundo, which as well as the pantheon at Rome, and some others to be met with in Italy, in my opinion, demonstrates that form to be the most durable of any.

It has now been purged and purified from all the infection contracted from the heathen rites, and is become a Christian church, dedicated to the Bleffed Virgin; who has long been constituted univerfal legatee, and executrix to all the antient goddesses, celestial, terrestrial, and infernal: and indeed, little more than the names are changed, the things continuing pretty much the same as ever.—The catholicks themselves do not attend to it: but it is not a little curious to confider, how fmall is the deviation in almost every article of their present rites from those of the antients. I have fomewhere feen an observation, which feems to be a full one: That during the long reign of heathenism, superstition had altogether exhausted her talent for invention; so that

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when a fuperstitious spirit seized Christians, they were under a necessity of borrowing from their predecessors, and imitating some part of their idolatry. This appears to be strictly the case. I took notice of it to Signor R——, who is not the most zealous sectary in the world, and who frank-

ly owned the truth of the observation.

In some places the very same images still remain: They have only christened them; and what was Venus or Proferpine, is now Mary Magdalene, or the Virgin. The same ceremonies are daily performed before these images; in the same language, and nearly in the same manner. The saints are perpetually coming down in person, and working miracles, as the heathen gods did of old. The walls of the temples are covered with the vows of pilgrims as they were formerly. The holy water, which was held in fuch detestation by the first Christians, is again revered, and sprinkled about with the same devotion as in the time of paganism. The same incense is burnt, by priests arrayed in the same manner, with the same grimmaces and genuflections, before the fame images, and in the fame temples too. In short, so nearly do the rites coincide, that were the Pagan high-prieft to come back, and re-allume his functions, he would only have to learn a few new names; to get the Mass, the Paters, and the Aves by heart; which would be much easier to him, as they are in a language he understands, but which his modern fuccessors are often ignorant of. Some things to be fure, would puzzle him; and he would swear that all the mysteries of Eleusis were nothing to the amazing mystery of transubstantiation; the only one that ever attempted to fet both our understanding and our senses at defiance, and baffles equally all the faculties both of the foul and body. -He would, likewife be a good deal at a loss to account for the strange metamorphosis of some of his

old friends. That (he would fay) I can well remember was the statue of Venus-Meretrix, and was only worshipped by the loose and voluptuous. She feems to be wonderfully improved fince you made her a Christian; for I find she is now become the great protectress of chastity and of virtue.- Juno too, who was fo implacable and fo revengeful, you have foftened down into a very moderate fort of deity; for I observe you address her with as little fear or ceremony as any of the rest of them; I wish you would make the Furies Christians too, for furely they would be much the better for it. -- But obferving the figure of St. Anthony; he would exclaim with aftonishment.—But what do I behold!— Jupiter, the fovereign of gods and men, with a ragged cloak over his shoulders! What a humiliating spectacle! Well do I remember, with what awe we bent before that once respectable image. But what has become of the thunderbolt, which he held in his hand to chastise the world; and what is that he has got in its place? His conductor would tell him, that it was only a piece of rope, with knots upon it, to chaffife himself; adding, that he was now doing penance for his long usurpation; and that the thunder had long ago been put into better hands.-However, he would foon find, that even these saints sometimes change their names, according to the enthusiastic caprice of the people; and from this versatility, he would still be in hopes, in process of time, to see his friend Jupiter realfume his bolt and his dignity.

Do you remember old Huet,—the greatest of all originals?—One day, as he passed the statue of Jupiter in the capital, he pulled off his hat, and made him a bow.—A Jacobite gentleman, who observed it, asked him why he paid so much respect to that old gentleman.—For the same reason, replied Huet, that you pay so much to the Pretender. Besides,

added

added he, I think there is rather a greater probability that his turn will come round again, than that of your hero: I shall therefore endeavour to keep well with him, and hope he will never forget that I took notice of him in the time of his adversity.

Indeed, within the course of my own observation, I can recollect some of the most capital faints in the calendar, who have been difgraced by the people, and new names given to their statues. When we were in Portugal last war, the people of Castel Branco, were fo enraged at St. Antonio for allowing the Spaniards to plunder their town, contrary, as they affirmed, to his express agreement with them, that they broke many of his statues to pieces; and one that had been more revered than the rest, they took the head off, and clapped on one of St. Francis in its place; whose name and statue ever after remained. Even the great St. Januarius himfelf, I am told, was in imminent danger during the last famine at Naples. A Swifs gentleman affured me, that he had heard them load him with abuse and invective; and declared point-blank, that if he did not procure them corn by fuch a time, he should no longer be their faint. However, fuch instances are but rare; and in general the poor catholicks are fully indemnified for these sudden fits of passion and refentment, from the full perfuafion of the immediate presence and protection of their beloved patrons.

I have observed, with pleasure, that glow of gratitude and affection that has an intated their countenances; and am persuaded that that the warmth of enthusiastic devotion they often seel before their favourite saints, particularly their semale ones, must have something extremely delightful in it; resembling, perhaps, the pure and delicate sensations of the most respectful love. I own I have sometimes envied them their seelings; and in my heart cursed the pride of reason and philosophy, with all its

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cool and taffeless triumphs, that lulls into a kind of floical apathy, these most exquisite sensations of the foul. Who would not chuse to be deceived, when at the deception raises in him these delicious passions, that are fo worthy of the human heart; and for which, of all others, it feems to be the most fitted? But if once you have steeled it over with the hard or and impenetrable temper of philosophy; these finefoun threads of weakness and affection, that were for pliable, and fo eafily tried, became hard and inflexible; and for ever lose that delicate tone of senfibility that put them into a kind of unison and vibration with every object around us: For it is certainly true, what has been faid of one part of our fpecies, may almost with equal justice be applied to the whole,

" That to their weakness half their charms we owe."

I remember Dr. Tissot told me, he had a patient that actually died of love for Christ; and when in the last extremity, seemed still to enjoy the greatest happiness; calling upon him with all the fondness of the most enthusiastic passion. And from what I have often observed before the statues of the Virgin and St. Agatha, I am persuaded, they have many inamoratos that would wil-

ingly lay down their lives for them.

Now, pray don't you think too, that this perfonal kind of worship is much better adapted to the capacities of the vulgar, than the more pure and sublime modes of it; which would only distract and confound their simple understandings, unaccustomed to speculation; and that certainly require something gross and material, some object of sense to fix their attention.—This even seems to have been the opinion of some of the sacred writers, who often represent God under some material form.

Were

Were you to attempt to give a country-fellow an idea of the Deity; were you to tell him of a being that is immaterial, and yet whose effence penetrates all matter; who has existed from all eternity; and whose extension is equally boundless with his duration; who fills and pervades millions of worlds, and animates every object they contain; and who in the sublime language of our poet,

- "Tho' chang'd thro' all, is yet in all the same,
- "Great in the earth, as in th' ætherial frame: Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
- "Glows in the flars, and bloffoms in the trees;
- "Lives thro' all life, extends thro' all extent; "Spreads undivided, operates unspent,
- "To him no high, no low, no great, no small, "He fills, he bounds, connects and equals all."

Now, what do you imagine he would think of fuch a being? I am afraid his understanding would be so bewildered, that he could not think at all. But, set up before him the figure of a fine woman, with a beautiful child in her arms, the most interesting object in nature; and tell him she can procure him every thing he wants; he knows perfectly well what he is about; seels himself animated by the object, and prays to her with all his might.

Adieu.—We are going to be very bufy; and are preparing every thing for one of the greatest objects of our expedition; the examination of mount Ætna. Indeed, we have received but bad encouragement; and are beginning to doubt of the possibility of success. Recupero tells us, that the season is not far enough advanced yet, by some months; and that he does not think it will be possible to get near the summit of the mountain. The last winter, he says, was so uncommonly severe, that the circle of snow extended much nearer the foot of the mountain than usual; that although

though this circle is now greatly contracted, it still extends nine or ten miles below the crater .-He advises us to return this way in the month of August; and, if possible, make Ætna the last part of our expedition. If we do not succeed tomorrow, we shall probably follow his advice: but we are all determined to make a bold push for it.-The weather is the most favourable that can be imagined: Here is a delightful evening: and by the flar-light we can observe the smoke rolling down the fide of the mountain like a vast torrent. Recupero fays, this is a fure indication of the violence of the cold in these exalted regions of the atmosphere, which condenses the vapour, and makes it fall down, the moment it iffues out of the crater. He advises us, by all means, to provide plenty of liqueurs, warm fur cloaks, and hatchets to cut wood; as we shall probably be obliged to pass the night in the open air, in a climate, he affure us, as cold as that of Greenland. It is very fingular if this be true; for at present we are melting with heat, in thin fuits of taffeta. Adien. You shall know it all on our return, if we do not share the fate of Empedocles.

Ever your's

LETTER IX.

Catania, May 29th.

ON the 27th, by day-break, we fet off to vifit mount Ætna, that venerable and respectable father of mountains. His base, and his immense declivities, are covered over with a numerous progeny of his own: For every great eruption produces a new mountain; and perhaps by the number of these, better than by any other method, the number of eruptions, and the age of Ætna itfelf, might be afcertained.

The whole mountain is divided into three diftinct regions, called La Regione Culta, or Piedmontese, The Fertile Region; la Regione Sylvosa, or Nemorofa, The Woody Region; and la Relione De-

ferta, or Scoperta, The Barren Region.

These three are as different, both in climate and productions, as the three zones of the earth; and perhaps, with equal propriety, might have been stiled the Torrid, the Temperate, and the Frigid zone. The first region surrounds the foot of the mountain, and constitutes the most fertile country in the world on all fides of it, to the extent of about fourteen or fifteen miles, where the woody region begins. It is composed almost entirely of lava, which, after a number of ages, is at last converted into the most fertile of all soils.

At Nicolofi, which is twelve miles up the mountain, we found the barometer at 27: 11; at Catania it flood at 29: 8; although the former elevation is not very great, probably not exceeding 3000 feet, yet the climate was totally changed. At Catania the harvest was entirely over, and the heats were insupportable; here they were moderate, and in many places the corn is as yet green. The road for these twelve miles is the worst I ever travelled; entirely over old lavas and the mouths of extinguished volcanos now converted into corn-fields, vineyards and orchards.

The fruit of this region is reckoned the finest in Sicily, particularly the figs, of which they have a great variety. One of these of a very large size, esteemed superior in slavour to all the rest, they

pretend is peculiar to Ætna.

The lavas, which, as I have already faid, form this region of the mountain, take their rife from an infinite number of the most beautiful little mountains on earth, which are every where scattered on the immense declivity of Atna. These are all of a regular figure; either that of a cone, or a femisphere; and all, but a very few, are covered with beautiful trees, and the richest verdure: Every eruption generally forms one of these mountains. As the great crater of Ætna, itself is raised to such an enormous height above the lower region of the mountain, it is not possible that the internal fire raging for a vent, even round the base, and no doubt vastly below it, should be carried to the height of twelve or thirteen thousand feet, for probably so high is the fummit of Ætna. It has therefore generally happened, that after shaking the mountain and its neighbourhood for fome time, it at last bursts open its fide, and this is called an eruption. At first it only sends forth a thick smoke and showers of ashes that lay waste the adjacent country: These are soon followed by red-hot stones, and rocks of a great fize, thrown to an immenfeheight in the air. The fall of these stones, together with the quantities of ashes discharged at the fame

fame time, at last form the spherical and conical mountains I have mentioned. Sometimes this process is finished in the course of a sew days, sometimes it lasts for months, which was the case in the great eruption 1669. In that case, the mountain formed is of a great fize; some of them are not less than seven or eight miles round, and upwards of one thousand seet in perpendicular height; others are not more than two or three miles round, and three or sour hundred seet

high.

After the new mountain is formed, the lava generally bursts out from its lower fide; and bearing every thing before it, is for the most part terminated by the sea. This is the common progress of an eruption; however, it sometimes happens, though rarely, that the lava burfts at once from the fide of the mountain, without all these attending circumftances; and this is commonly the case with the eruptions of Vesuvius, where the elevation being fo much smaller, the melted matter is generally carried up into the crater of the mountain, which then exhibits the phænomena I have described; discharging showers of flones and ashes from the mouth of the volcano. without forming any new mountain, but only adding confiderably to the height of the old one; till at last the lava, rifing near the summit, bursts the fide of the carter, and the eruption is declar-This has literally been the case with two cruptions I have been an attentive witness of in that mountain; but Ætna is upon a much larger fcale, and one crater is not enough to give vent to fuch oceans of liquid fire.

Recupero affures me, he saw in an eruption of that mountain large rocks of fire discharged to the height of some thousand seet, with a noise much more terrible than that of thunder. He

meafured

measured from the time of their greatest elevation till they reached the ground, and sound they took twenty-one seconds to descend; which, according to the rule of the spaces, being as the squares of the times, amounts, I think, to upwards of 7000 seet. A most astonishing height surely, and requiring a force of projection beyond what we have any conception of. I measured the height of the explosions of Vesuvius by the same rule, and never observed any of the stones thrown from it to take more than nine seconds to descend, which shews they had risen to little

more than 1200 feet.

Our landlord at Nicolosi gave us an account of the fingular fate of the beautiful country near Hybla, at no great distance from hence. It was so celebrated for its fertility, and particularly for its honey, that it was called Mel Pass, till it was overwhelmed by the lava of Ætna: and having then become totally barren, by a kind of pun its name was changed to Mal Paffi. In a fecond eruption, by a shower of ashes from the mountain, it soon re-assumed its ancient beauty and fertility; and for many years was called Bel Passi. Last of all, in the unfortunate æra of 1669, it was again laid under an ocean of fire, and reduced to the most wretched sterility, fince which time it is known again by its fecond appellation of Mal Passi. However, the lava, in its course over this beautiful country, has left feveral little islands or hillocks; just enough to shew what it formerly was. These make a fingular appearance, in all the bloom of the most luxuriant vegetation, furrounded and rendered almost inaccessible by large fields of black and rugged lava. The mountain from whence the first eruption issued, that covered the Mel Passi, is known by the name of Montpelieri; I was firuck with its beautiful appearance at distance and could not resist the desire I had

had of examining it minutely, as well as of observing the effects of the two eruptions that overwhelm-

ed this celebrated country.

Montpelieri is rather of a spherical than a conical shape, and does not rise in perpendicular height above 300 feet, but it is so perfectly regular on every side, and so richly overspread with fruits and slowers, that I could not leave so heavenly a spot, without the greatest regret. Its cup or crater is large in proportion to the mountain, and is as exactly hollowed out as the best made bowl. I walked quite round its outward edge, and think the circumference must be somewhat more than a mile.

This mountain was formed by the first eruption that destroyed the country of Mel Passi, and is of a very old date. It buried a great number of villages and country-houses; and particularly two noble churches, which are more regretted than all the rest, on account of three statues, reckoned at that time the most perfect in the island. They have attempted, but in vain, to recover them; as the spot where the churches stood could never be justly afcertained. Indeed it is impossible it should; for these churches were built of lava, which it is well known is immediately melted, when it comes into contact with a torrent of new erupted matter: And Massa says, that in some eruptions of Atna, the lava has poured down with fuch a fudden impetuofity, that in the course of a few hours, churches, palaces, and villages, have been entirely melted down, and the whole run off in fusion without leaving the least mark of their former existence. But it the lava has had any confiderable time to cool, this fingular effect never happens.

The great eruption of 1669, after shaking the whole country around for sour months, and forming a very large mountain of stones and ashes, burst out about a mile above Montpelieri, and descend-

ing like a torrent, bore directly against the middle of that, mountain, and (they pretend) perforated it from fide to fide: this however I doubt, as it must have broken the regular form of the mountain, which is not the case. But certain it is that it pierced it to a great depth. The lava then divided into two branches; and furrounding this mountain, joined again on its fouth fide; and laying waste the whole country betwixt that and Catania, scaled the walls of that city, and poured its flaming torrent into the ocean. In its way, it is faid to have des stroyed the possessions of near 30,000 people, and reduced them to beggary. It formed leveral hills where there were formerly valleys, and filled up a large lake, of which there is not now the least veltige to be feen.

As the events of this eruption are better known than any other, they tell a great many fingular flories of it; one of which, however incredible it may appear, is well afcertained. A vineyard belonging to a convent of Jesuits, lay directly in its way. This vineyard was formed on an ancient lava, probably a thin one, with a number of caverns and crevices under it. The liquid lava entering into These caverns, soon filled them up, and by degrees bore up the vineyard; and the Jesuits, who every moment expected to see it buried, beheld with amazement the whole field begin to move off. It was carried on the surface of the lava to a considerable distance; and though the greatest part was destroyed, yet some of it remains to this day.

We went to examine the mouth from whence this dread ul torrent issued; and were surprised to find it only a small hole, of about three or four yards diameter. The mountain from whence it sprung. I think, is little less than the conical part of Vessivius.

There is a vast cavern on the opposite side of it, where people go to shoot wild pigeons, which breed there

there in great abundance. The innermost parts of this cavern are so very dismal and gloomy, that our landlord told us some people had lost their senses from having advanced too far, imagining they saw devils and the spirits of the damned; for it is still very generally believed here, that Ætna is the mouth of hell.

We found a degree of wildness and ferocity in the inhabitants of this mountain, that I have not observed any where else. It put me in mind of an observation the Padre della Torre (the historiographer of mount Vesuvius) told me he had often made in the confines of Naples; that in the places where the air is most impregnated with fulphur and hot exhalations, the people were always most wicked and vicious. Whatever truth there may be in the observation, the people about Nicolosi at least feem to confirm it. The whole village flocked round us, and the women in particular abused us exceedingly; the cause of which we at last found was, that Fblooming complexion and white skin had made them take him for one of their own fex. They made a great clamour, and it was with difficulty we could appeale them. The person whom Recupero had appointed to accompany us, known by the name of the Cyclops, (the man in the island that is best acquainted with mount Ætna) was ordered by them not to go with us; and if we had not at latt obtained their confent by foothing and flattery, the best method with women, he durst not have disobeyed them. At first we had been obliged to thut the gate of the court, they were fo very noify and tumultuous; but when our landlord (a priest) for whom we had letters from Catania, affured them that we were Christians, and came with no bad intentions, they became more moderate, and we ventured out amongst them. This confidence foon acquired theirs; and in a short time son while precipity which breed

time we became good friends, and had a great

deal of conversation.

It was with much difficulty I could perfuade them that we were not come to fearch for hidden treasures, a great quantity of which they believe is to be found in Montpelieri; and when I went to that mountain they were then fully convinced that this was our intention. Two of the men followed me, and kept a close eye on every step that I took; and when I lifted any bit of lava or pumice, they came running up, thinking it was fomething very precious; but when they observed they were only bits of stone, and that I put them into my pocket, they laughed heartily, talking to one another in their mountain jargon, which is unintelligible even to Italians. However, as most of them speak Italian so as to be understood, they asked me what I was going to make of those bits of stone? I told them they were of great value in our country; that the people there had a way of making gold of them: At this they both feemed exceedingly furprised, and spoke again in their own tongue. However, I found they did not believe me; one of them told me, if that it had been true, I certainly would not have been fo ready in telling it: But, said he, if it is so, we will serve you for ever, if you will teach us that art; for then we shall be the richest people on earth. I assured them that I had not yet learned it myself, and that it was a fecret known only to very few. They were likewise a good deal surprised to see me pull out of my pocket a magnetical needle and a fmall electrometer, which I had prepared at Catania to examine the electrical state of the air; and I was at first afraid they should have taken me for a conjurer (which you know already happened amongst the Appenines) but luckily that idea did not strike them. On

On our way back to Nicolofi we were joined by three or four more, with their wives. I began to be a little afraid of myself, lest they should insist on knowing the secret. However, I took out my bits of lava, and told them they were at their service, if they had any occasion for them. But they resused them, saying, they wished to the Virgin, and St. Agatha, that I could take away the whole of it; as it had ruined the finest coun-

try in all Sicily.

One fellow, who affumed an air of fuperior wisdom and dignity to the rest, made them form a circle round him, and began to interrogate me with great gravity and composure. It was with difficulty I could keep my countenance; but as I was alone with them, at some distance from the village, I was afraid of offending. He defired me to answer him with truth and precision, what were the real motives of our coming fo fatiguing and disagreeable a journey? I told him, on my word, that we had no other motive but curiofity to examine mount Atna. On which, laughing to one another with great contempt; Un bel ragione questo, non evero, faid they; (a very pretty reason. truly.) The old fellow then asked me what country we were of. I told him, we were Inglese. E dove è loro paese, said he; where-abouts does their country lie? I told him it was a great way off, on the other fide of the world. Da vero, faid the fellow, -e credono in Christo quelli Inglese? -I told him (laughing) that they did .-- Ah, faid he shaking his head, mi pare che non credono tropo -One of the company then observed, that he remembered feveral of these Inglese, that at different times, had paid vifits to mount Ætna, and that they never yet could find out their motive; but that he well recollected, to have heard many of their old people fay, that the Inglese had a queen that had burnt in the mountain for many vears

years past; and that they supposed these visits were made from some devotion or respect to her memory. I assured them that the Inglese had but too little respect for their queens when they were alive, but that they never troubled themselves about them after they were dead: However, as all the others confirmed this testimony, I thought it was best to say little against it; but I was extremely curious to know who this queen might be. They alledged that I knew much better than they; but added, that her name was Anna.

I could not conceive what queen Anne had done to bring her there; and was puzzling myself to find it out, when one of them foon cleared up the matter; he told me she was wife to a king that had been a Christian, and that she had made him an Heretic, and was in confequence condemned to burn for ever in mount Ætna. In short. I found it was no other than poor Anne Boleyne. . So foon as I mentioned the name, Si fignor, faid the fellow, l'istessa, l'istessa, la connosse meglio che noi. I asked if her husband was there too, for that he deserved it much better than she: sicura, faid he, and all his heretic subjects too; and if you are of that number, you need not be in fuch a hurry to get thither, you will be fure of it at last. I thanked him and went to join our company, not a little amused with the conversation.

We foon after left Nicolofi, and in an hour and an half's travelling, over barren ashes and lava, we arrived on the confines of the Regione Sylvofa, or the Temperate Zone. So soon as we entered these delightful forests, we seemed to have got into another world. The air, which before was sultry and hot, was now cool and refreshing; and every breeze was loaded with a thousand persumes, the whole ground being covered over with the richest aromatic plants.—Many parts

of this region are furely the most heavenly spots upon earth, and if Ætna resembles hell within, it may with equal justice be faid to resemble

paradife without.

It is indeed a curious confideration, that this mountain should re-unite every beauty and every horror; and, in fhort, all the most opposite, and diffimilar objects in nature. Here you observe a gulph, that formerly threw out torrents of fire, now covered with the most luxuriant vegetation; and from an object of terror, become one of delight. Here you gather the most delicious fruit, rifing from what was but lately a black and barren rock. Here the ground is covered with every flower; and we wander over these beauties, and contemplate this wilderness of sweets, without confidering that hell, with all its terrors, is immediately under our feet; and that but a few yards feparate us from lakes of liquid fire and brimftone.

But our astonishment still encreases, on casting our eyes on the higher regions of the mountain. There we behold, in perpetual union, the two elements that are at perpetual war; an immense gulph of fire, for ever existing in the midst of snows, which it has not power to melt; and immense fields of snow and ice for ever surrounding this gulph of fire, which they have not power to

extinguish.

The woody region of Atna ascends for about eight or nine miles, and forms a zone or girdle, of the greatest green, all around the mountain. This night we passed through little more than the half of it; arriving some time before sun-set at our lodgings, which was no other than a large cave, formed by one of the most antient and venerable lavas. It is called La Spelonca del Capriole, or the goats cavern, because frequented by those

those animals; who take refuge there in bad weather.

Here we were delighted with the contemplation of many grave and beautiful objects; the prospect on all sides is immense; and we already seem to be listed up from the earth, and to have got into a new world.

Our cavern is furrounded by the most stately and majestic oaks; of the dry leaves of which, we made very comfortable beds; and with our hatchets, which we had brought on purpose, we cut down great branches, and, in a short time, had a fire large enough to roast an ox. I observed my thermometer, and found, from 71 at Nicolosi, it had now fallen below 60. The barometer stood at 24: 2. In one end of our cave we still found a great quantity of snow, which seemed to be sent there on purpose for us, as there was no water to be found. With this we silled our tea-kettle, as tea and bread and butter was the only supper we had provided; and probably the best one to prevent us from being overcome

by fleep or fatigue. and it red to the to make a o

Not a great way from this cavern, are two of the most beautiful mountains of all that number: that fpring from Ætna. I mounted one of our best mules, and with a good deal of difficulty arrived at the fummit of the highest of them, just a little before funfet. The prospect of Sicily, with the furrounding fea and all its islands, was wonderfully noble. The whole course of the river Semetus, the ruins of Hybla, and feveral other antient towns; the rich corn-fields and vineyards on the lower region of the mountain, and the amazing number of beautiful mountains below, made a delightful feene. The hollow craters of these two mountains are each of them confiderably larger than that of Vefuvius. They are now filled with flately oaks, and covered to a great depth with the richest foil. I observed that

this region of *Ætna*, like the former, is composed of lava; but this is now covered so deep with earth, that it is no where to be seen, but in the beds of the torrents. In many of these it is worn down by the water to the depth of fifty or fixty seet, and in one of them still considerably more—What an idea does not this give of the amazing antiquity of the

eruptions of this mountain ! and the stand the stand

As foon as it was dark we retired to our cave, and took possession of our bed of leaves. Our rest, however, was fomewhat disturbed by the noise of a mountain that lay a good way off on our right. It discharged quantities of smoke, and made several explosions like heavy canon at a distance; but what is fingular, we could observe no appearance of fire. This mountain was formed by an eruption in 1766, now upwards of four years ago; the fire of which is not yet extinguished, neither is the lava by any means cold. This lava spent its fury on a beautiful forest, which it laid waste to the extent of a good. many miles. In many places it has run into gullies of a great depth, which it has filled up to the height, we are told, of 200 feet. It is in these places where it retains the greatest heat. On our road to-day we fcrambled up this lava, and went a confiderable way over its furface, which appeared perfectly cold; but it is certain, that in many places it still emits volumes of fmoke, particularly after rain; and the people fay, what I can readily believe, that this will continue to be the case for fome years, where the lava is thickest. A folid body of fire, some hundreds of feet thick, and of so great an extent, must certainly retain its heat for many years. The furface indeed foon becomes black and hard, and incloses the liquid fire within, in a kind of folid box, excluding all impressions from the external air or from the weather. Thus, I have feen, many months after eruptions of Mount Vefuvius,

Vesuvius, a bed of leva though only of a few feet thick, has continued red hot in the center long after the furface was cold; and a flick thrust into its crevices, inflantly took fire, although there was

no perceptible heat without.

Massa, a Sicilian author of credit, says, he was at Catania eight years after the great eruption in 1669, and that he still found the lava in many places was not cold: But there is an easy method of calculating the time that bodies take to cool :- Sir Isaac Newton, I think, in his account of the comet of 1680, supposes the times to be as the squares of their diameters; and finding that a folid ball of metal of two inches, made red hot, required upwards of an hour to become perfectly cold, made the calculation from that to a body of the diameter of the earth, and found it would require upwards of twenty thoufand years. If this rule be just, you may easily compute the time that the lava will take to become thoroughly cold; and that you may have time to do fo, I shall here break off my letter, which I am obliged to write in bed, in a very aukward and difagreeable posture; the cause of which shall be explained to you in my next. Adieu.

wind the court of the court of a company of the court of which the account the country of the control of the resident the sead of the property of the season of the sea will policy and soil we produce be a figure and are A dal Balance to Landy about the fall of a gradual region of a gradual the desired alleged and the second of the se telebrate and appropriately of the new contract and more which the state of . The bearing of the Line leaves suggested the work of the and have privile grabulus a spokeholytelle beid a et I would be realised to be the real in the come and another

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mouque great Catania, May 29th, at night.

no perceptible heat without

AFTER getting a comfortable nap on our bed of leaves in the Spelonca del Capriole, we awoke about eleven o'clock; and melting down a fufficent quantity of fnow, we boiled our tea-kettle, and made a hearty meal, to prepare us for the remaining part of our expedition. We were nine in number; for we had our three fervants, the Cyclops (our conductor) and two men to take care of our mules. The Cyclops now began to display his great knowledge of the mountain, and we followed him with implicit confidence. Henconducted us over "Antres vaft, and De-" farts wild," where fcarce human foot had ever trod. Sometimes through gloomy forests, which by day-light were delightful; but now, from the universal darkness, the rustling of the trees, the heavy, dull, bellowing of the mountain, the vast expance of ocean stretched at an immense distance below us, inspired a kind of awful horror. Sometimes we found ourselves ascending great rocks of lava, where if our mules should make but a false step, we might be thrown headlong over the precipice. However, by the affiftance of the Cyclops, we overcame all these difficulties; and he managed matters fo well, that in the space of two hours we found we had got above the regions of vegetation; and had left the forests of Atna far behind. These appeared now like a dark and gloomy gulph below us, that furrounded the mountain.

The profpect before us was of a very different nature; we beheld an expanse of snow and ice

that alarmed us exceedingly, and almost staggered our resolution. In the center of this, but still at a great distance, we described the high summit of the mountain, rearing its tremendous head, and vomiting our torrents of smoke. It indeed appeared altogether inaccessible, from the vast extent of the fields of fnow and ice that furrounded it. Our diffidence was still increased by the fentiments of the Cyclops. He told us, it often happened, that the surface of the mountain being hot below, melted the fnow in particular spots, and formed pools of water, where it was impoffible to foresee our danger; that it likewise happened, that the furface of the water, as well as the snow, was sometimes covered with black ashes, that rendered it exceedingly deceitful; that however, if we thought proper, he should lead us on with as much caution as possible. Accordingly, after holding a council of war, which you know people generally do when they are very much afraid, we detached our cavalry, to the forest below, and prepared to climb the fnows. The Cyclops, after taking a great draught of brandy, defired us to be of good cheer; that we had plenty of time, and might take as many refts as we pleased. That the snow could be little more than feven miles, and that we certainly should be able to pass it before sunrise. Accordingly, taking each of us a dram of liquor, which foon removed every objection, we began our march.

The afcent for some time was not steep; and as the surface of the snow sunk a little, we had tolerable good sooting; but as it soon began to grow steeper, we found our labour greatly increase: however, we determined to persevere, calling to mind in the midst of our labour, that the emperor Adrian and the philosopher Plato had undergone the same; and from the same motive

too, to see the rising sun from the top of Ætna. After incredible labour and fatigue, but at the same time mixed with a great deal of pleafure, we arrived before dawn at the ruins of an antient structure, called Il Torre del Filosofo, supposed to have been built by the philosopher Empedocles, who took up his habitation here, the better to fludy the nature of mount Ætna. By others, it is supposed to be the ruins of a temple of Vulcan, whose shop, all the world knows (where he used to make excellent thunderbolts and celeftial armour, as well as nets to catch his wife when she went astray) was ever kept in mount Ætna. Here we rested ourselves for some time, and made a fresh application to our liquor bottle, which I am persuaded, both Vulcan and Empedocles, had they been there, would have

greatly approved of after fuch a march.

I found the mercury had fallen to 20: 6. We had now time to pay our adorations in a filent contemplation of the sublime objects of nature. The sky was clear, and the immense vault of the heavens appeared in awful majefty and splendor. We found ourselves more struck with veneration than below, and at first were at a loss to know the cause; till we observed with astonishment, that the number of stars seemed to be infinitely increased; and the light of each of them appeared brighter than usual. The whiteness of the milky way was like a pure flame that thot across the heavens; and with the naked eye we could observe clusters of stars that were invisible in the regions below. We did not at first attend to the cause, nor recollect that we had now passed through ten or twelve thousand feet of gross vapour, that blunts and confuses every ray, before it reaches the furface of the earth. We were amazed at the distinctness of vision, and exclaimed H 2 together,

together, What a glorious fituation for an obfervatory! Had Empedocles had the eyes of Gallileo what discoveries must he not have made! We regretted that Jupiter was not visible, as I am perfuaded we might have discovered some of his fatellites with the naked eye, or at least with a small glass which I had in my pocket. We observed a light a great way below us on the mountain, which feemed to move amongst the forests, but whether an Ignis Fatuus, or what it was, I shall not pretend to fay. We likewise took notice of feveral of those meteors called Falling Stars, which still appeared to be as much elevated above us; as when feen from the plain; fo that in all probability, those bodies move in regions much beyond the bounds that some phiso-

fophers have affigned to our atmosphere.

After contemplating these objects for some time, we fet off, and foon after arrived at the foot of the great crater of the mountain. This is of an axact conical figure, and rifes equally on all fides. It is composed folely of ashes and other burnt materials, discharged from the mouth of the volcano, which is in its center. This conical mountain is of a very great fize; its circumference cannot be less than ten miles. Here we took a fecond reft, as the greatest part of our fatigue still remained. The Mercury had fallen to 20: 4! -- We found this mountain excessively steep; and although it had appeared black, yet it was likewise covered with snow, but the furface (luckily for us) was spread over with a pretty thick layer of ashes, thrown out from the crater. Had it not been for this, we never should have been able to get to the top; as the fnow was every where frozen hard and folid, from the piercing cold of the air.

In about an hour's climbing, we arrived at a

place where there was no fnow; and where a warm and comfortable vapour iffued from the mountain, which induced us to make another halt. Here I found the mercury at 19:61. The thermometer was fallen three degrees below the point of congelation; and before we left the fummit of Ætna, it fell two degrees more, viz. to 27.—From this fpot it was only about 300 yards to the highest fummit of the mountain, where we arrived in full time, to fee the most wonderful

and most sublime fight in nature.

But here description must ever fall short; for no imagination has dared to form an idea of fo glorious and so magnificent a scene. Neither is there on the furface of this globe, any one point that unites fo many awful and fublime objects-The immense elevation from the surface of the earth, drawn as it were to a fingle point, without any neighbouring mountain for the fenses and imagination to rest upon; and recover from their astonishment in their way down to the world. This point or pinnacle, raised on the brink of a bottomless gulph, as old as the world, often discharging rivers of fire, and throwing out burning rocks, with a noise that shakes the whole island. Add to this, the unbounded extent of the profpect, comprehending the greatest diversity and the most beautiful scenery in nature; with the rising fun, advancing in the east, to illuminate the wondrous fcene.

The whole atmosphere by degrees kindled up, and shewed dimly and faintly the boundless prospect around. Both sea and land looked dark and confused, as if only emerging from their original chaos; and light and darkness seemed still undivided; till the morning by degrees advancing, completed the feparation. The stars are extinguished, and the shades disappear. The forests, which

which but now feemed black and bottomless gulphs, from whence no ray was reflected to shew their form or colours, appear a new creation rifing to the fight; catching life and beauty from every increasing beam. The scene still enlarges, and the horizon feems to widen and expand itfelf on all fides; till the fun, like the great Creator, appears in the east, and with his plastic ray completes the mighty scene. --- All appears enchantment; and it is with difficulty we can believe we are still on earth. The fenses, unaccustomed to the sublimity of such a scene, are bewildered and confounded; and it is not till after some time, that they are capable of separating and judging of the objects that compose it, -The body of the fun is feen rifing from the ocean, immense tracts both of sea and land intervening; the islands of Lipari, Panari, Alicudi, Strombolo, and Volcano, with their smoaking summits appéar under your feet; and you look down on the whole of Sicily as on a map: and can trace every river through all its windings, from its fource to its mouth. The view is absolutely boundless on every fide; nor is there any one object within the circle of vision, to interrupt it; to that the fight is every where lost in the immenfity, and I am perfuaded it is only from the imperfection of our organs, that the coasts of Africa, and even of Greece, are not discovered, as they are certainly above the horizon. The circumference of the visible horizon on the top of Ætna cannot be less than 2000 miles: At Malta, which is near 200 miles distant, they perceive all the eruptions from the fecond region; and that island is often discovered from about one half the elevation of the mountain; fo that at the whole elevation, the horizon must extend to near double that distance, or 400 miles, which makes 800 for the diameter of the circle and 2400 for the circumstance.

circumserence. But this is by much too vast for our fenses, not intended to grasp so boundless a scene. I find, indeed, by some of the Sicilian authors, particularly Massa, that the African coast, as well as that of Naples, with many of its islands, have been discovered from the top of Ætna. Of this, however, we cannot boast, though we can very well believe it. Indeed, if we knew the height of the mountain, it would be eafy to calculate the extent of its visible horizon; and (vice versa) if its visible horizon was exactly ascertained, it would be an easy matter to calculate the height of the mountain. -- But the most beautiful part of the scene is certainly the mountain itself; the island of Sicily, and the numerous islands lying round it. All these, by a kind of magic in vision, that I am at a loss to account for, feems as if they were brought close round the skirts of Etna, the distances appearing reduced to nothing.—Perhaps this fingular effect is produced by the rays of light passing from a rarer medium into a denser; which (from a known law in optics) to an observer in the rarer medium, appears to lift up the objects that are at the bottom of the dense one; as a piece of money placed in a bason appears listed up as soon as the bason is filled with water.

The Regione Diferta, or the frigid zone of Ætna, is the first object that calls your attention. It is marked out by a circle of snow and ice, which extend on all sides to the distance of about eight miles. In the center of this circle, the great crater of the mountain rears its burning head, and the regions of intense cold and of intense heat seem for ever to be united in the same point.

—On the north side of the snowy region, they assure us, that there are several small lakes that are never thawed; and that in many places, the snow, mixed with the asses and salts of the mountain.

mountain, is accumulated to a vast depth: And indeed I suppose the quantity of salts contained in this mountain, is one great reason of the preservation of its snows.—The Regione Diferta is immediately fucceeded by the Sylvosa, or the woody region; which forms a circle or girdle of the most beautiful green, which furrounds the mountain on all fides, and is certainly one of the most delightful spots on earth. This presents a remarkable contrast with the desert region. It is not fmooth and even like the greatest part of the latter; but is finely variegated by an infinite number of those beautiful little mountains that have been formed by the different eruptions of Ætna. All these now have acquired a wonderful degree of fertility, except a very few that are but newly formed; that is within these five or fix hundred years: For it certainly requires some thoufands to brings them to their greatest degree of perfection. We looked down into the craters of these, and attempted, but in vain, to number them.

The circumference of this zone or great circle on Ætna is not less than 70 or 80 miles. It is every where fucceeded by the vineyards, orchards, and corn-fields that compose the Regione Culta, or the fertile region. This last zone is much broader than the others, and extends on all fides to the foot of the mountain. Its whole circumference, according to Recupero, is 183 miles. It is likewise covered with a number of little conical and fpherical mountains, and exhibits a wonderful variety of forms and colours; and makes a delightful contrast with the other two regions. It is bounded by the fea to the fouth and foutheast, and on all its other fides by the rivers Semetus and Alcantara, which run almost round it. The whole course of these rivers is seen at once,

once, and all their beautiful windings through these sertile valleys, looked upon as the favourite possession of Ceres herself, and the very scene of

the rape of her daughter Proferpine.

Cast your eyes a little farther, and you embrace the whole island, and see all its cities, rivers and mountains, delineated in the great chart of Nature: All the adjacent islands, the whole coast of Italy, as far as your eye can reach; for it is no where bounded, but every where lost in the space. On the sun's first rising, the shadow of the mountain extends across the whole island, and makes a large track visible even in the sea and in the air. By degrees this is shortened, and in a little time, is consined only to the neighbourhood of Ætna.

We now had time to examine a fourth region of this wonderful mountain, very different, indeed, from the others, and productive of very different sensations; but which has, undoubtedly, given being to all the rest; I mean the region of fire.

The present crater of this immense volcano is a circle of about three miles and a half in circumference. It goes shelving down on each side, and forms a regular hollow like a vast amphitheatre. From many places of this space, issue volumes of fulphureous fmoke, which, being much heavier than the circumambient air, instead of rifing in it, as fmoke generally does, immediately on its getting out of the crater, rolls down the fide of the mountain like a torrent, till coming to that part of the atmosphere of the same specific gravity with itself, it shoots off horizontally, and forms a large track in the air, according to the direction of the wind; which, happily for us, carried it exactly to the fide opposite to that where we were placed. The crater is fo hot, that it is

very dangerous, if not impossible, to go down into it; belides, the fmoke is very incommodious, and, in many places, the furface is fo foft, there have been inflances of people finking down in it, and paying for their temerity with their lives. Near the center of the crater is the great mouth of the volcano. That tremendous gulph fo celebrated in all ages, looked upon as the terror and fcourge both of this and another life; and equally useful to ancient poets, or to modern divines, when the Muse, or when the Spirit inspires. We beheld it with awe and with horror, and were not furprised that it had been confidered as the place of the damned. When we reflect on the immensity of its depth, the vast cells and caverns whence fo many lavas have iffued; the force of its eternal fire to raise up those lavas to fo vast a height, to support it as it were in the air, and even force it over the very fummit of the crater, with all the dreadful accompaniments; the boiling of the matter, the shaking of the mountain, the explosions of flaming rocks. &c. we must allow, that the most enthusiastic imagination, in the midst of all his terrors, hardly ever formed an idea of a hell more dreadful.

It was with a mixture both of pleasure and pain, that we quitted this awful scene. But the wind had risen very high, and clouds began to gather round the mountain: In a short time they formed like another heaven below us, and we were in hopes of seeing a thunder-storm under our seet: A scene that is not uncommon in these exalted regions, and which I have already seen on the top of the high Alps. But the clouds were soon dispelled again by the force of the wind, and we were disappointed in our expect.

tations. In sil slaggati afficial stages and

I had often been told of the great effect

produced by discharging a gun on the top of high mountains. I tried it here, when we were a good deal surprised to find, that instead of increasing the sound, it was almost reduced to nothing. The report was not equal to that of a pocket pistol: We compared it to the stroke of a stick on a door; and surely it is consistent with reason, that the thinner the air is, the less its impression must be on the ear; for in a vacuum there can be no noise, or no impression can be made; and the nearer the approach to a vacuum, the impression must always be the smaller. Where those great effects have been produced, it must have been amongst a number of mountains, where the sound is reverberated from one to the other.

When we arrived at the foot of the cone, we observed some rocks of an incredible fize, that have been discharged from the crater. The largest that has been observed from Vesuvius, is a round one of about twelve seet diameter. These are much greater; indeed almost in proportion of

the mountains to each other.

On our arrival at the Torre del Filosofo, we could not help admiring, that the ruins of this structure have remained uncovered for so many ages, so near the top of Atna, when thousands of places at a great distance from it, have been repeatedly buried by its lavas in a much shorter time. A proof that sew eruptions have risen so

high in the mountain.

Empedocles was a native of Agrigentum, and is supposed to have died 400 years before the Christian æra. Perhaps his vanity more than his philosophy led him to this elevated situation; nay, it is said to have carried him still much farther: That he might be looked upon as a god, and that the people might suppose he was taken up to heaven, he is recorded to have thrown him
felf

felf headlong into the great gulph of mount Ætna, never supposing that his death could be discovered to mankind; but the treacherous mountain threw out his slippers, which were of brass, and announced to the world the fate of the philosopher, who, by his death, as well as life, wanted only to impose upon mankind, and make them believe

that he was greater than they.

However, if there is such a thing as philosophy on earth, this surely ought to be its seat. The prospect is little inserior to that from the summit; and the mind enjoys a degree of serenity here, that even sew philosophers, I believe, could ever boast on that tremendous point.——All Nature lies expanded below your seet, in her gayest and most luxuriant dress, and you still behold united under one point of view, all the seasons of the year, and all the climates of the earth. The mediations are ever elevated in proportion to the grandeur and sublimity of the objects that surround us; and here, where you have all Nature to arouse your admiration, what mind can remain inactive?

It has likewise been observed, and from experience I can say with truth; that on the tops of the highest mountains, where the air is so pure and refined; and where there is not that immense weight of gross vapours pressing upon the body; the mind acts with greater freedom, and all the sunctions both of soul and body are performed in a superior manner. It would appear, that in proportion as we are raised above the habitations of men, all low and vulgar sentiments are left behind; and that the soul, in approaching the æthereal regions, shakes off its earthly affections, and already acquires something of their celestial purity.—Here, where you stand under a serene sky, and behold, with equal serenity, the tempest and

florm forming below your feet: The lightning, darting from cloud to cloud, and the thunder rolling round the mountain, and threatening with destruction the poor wretches below; the mind considers the little storms of the human passions as equally below her notice.—Surely the situation alone, is enough to inspire philosophy, and Empedocles had good reason for chusing it.

But, alas! how vain are all our reasonings! In the very midst of these meditations, my philofophy was at once overfet, and in a moment I found myself relapsed into a poor miserable mortal; was obliged to own, that pain was the greatest of evils; and would have given the world to have been once more arrived at those humble habitations, which but the moment before, I had looked down upon with fuch contempt-in running over the ice, my leg folded under me, and I received fo violent a sprain, that in a few minutes it fwelled to a great degree, and I found myself unable to put my foot to the ground. Every muscle and fibre was at that time chilled and froze by the extreme cold, the thermometer continuing fill below the point of conjelation. It was this circumstance, I suppose, that made the pain fo violent; for I lay a confiderable time on the ice in great agony: However, in these exalted regions, it was impossible to have a horse, or a carriage of any kind; and your poor philosopher was obliged to hop on one leg with two men fupporting him, for feveral miles over the fnow; and our wags here alledge, that he left the greatest part of his philosophy behind him, for the use of Empedocle's heirs and fuccessors.

I was happy to get to my mule, but when I once mere found myfelf on our bed of leaves in the Spelonca del Capriole, I thought I was in Paradife: So true it is, that a removal of pain is the greatest of pleasures. The agony I fusfiered.

fuffered, had thrown me into a profuse sweat and a fever: however, in an inftant I fell fast asleep, and in an hour and a half, awaked in perfect health. We had an excellent dish of tea, the most refreshing and agreeable I ever drank in all

my life.

We left the fummit of the mountain about fix o'clock, and it was eight at night before we reached Catania .- We observed, both with pleafure and pain, the change of the climate as we descended. From the regions of the most rigid winter, we foon arrived at those of the most delightful spring. On first entering the forests, the trees were still bare as in December, not a fingle leaf to be feen; but after we had descended a few miles, we found ourselves in the mildest, and the foftest of climates; the trees in full verdure, and the fields covered with all the flowers of the fummer; but as foon as we got out of the woods, and entered the torrid zone, we found the heats altogether insupportable, suffered dreadfully from them before we reached the city. On the road I faw many mountains which I intended to have vifited, but my sprain put it out of my power. One of the most remarkable is called the Monte Pelluse, the lava of which destroyed the great aqueduct of Catania for eighteen miles. It has here and there left a few arches; but nothing of any confequence.

Not far from this mountain stands the Monte Victoria, one of the most beautiful of all the numerous family of Ætna. It is of a pretty large fize, and perfectly regular, and feems to be in the gayest dress of any. Many of its trees, which, at a distance, we took to be oranges and citrons, appeared to be in full blow. It was the lava of this mountain that it is faid to have covered up the port of Ulvsses, which is now three miles diftant from the fea: but I should suppose this

eruption

eruption to have been much older than either

Ulysses or Troy.
On our arrival at Catania, we went immediately to bed, being exceedingly oppressed by the fatigue of our expedition; but still more by the violent heat of the day: A day, in which, I think, I have enjoyed a greater degree of pleasure, and suffered a greater degree of pain, than in any other

day of my life.

As my leg continues very much swelled, I am still confined to my room, and mostly, indeed, to my bed, from whence I have written you the greatest part of these two epistles, the enormous length of which I am ashamed of. However, as I have still omitted several articles, that I intended to take notice of, I shall add a sequel to-morrow; and fo conclude my account of mount Ætna. Had it not been for this abominable sprain, that holds me fast by the foot, you probably had not got off so easily; but I am obliged to drop all farther thoughts of climbing mountains, though there are many things I still wanted to examine. Adieu. Manual deserte el manual menten vellet ben

must reside it as production to the first and her production our distribution of the latter the second district of the age of the horizontal transfer and condition with the stime of the action to the local section is Could be a write about a day of the control of the See to said the there are to the stand and said said P. Marandat H. Stor it II have been bill de some menne Secretarian de la maria de la companya de la compan Total of the skin to the state of the state with the weak had the total and the state of a place Burn, a cit a sometime to progress the first suppression and a eval beat and astronoment of the important deservers the manage say batter a law hearth of the restaurant. The first provide the property of the second of the

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Catania, May 30th. tustif
WE took care to regulate two barometers at the foot of the mountain. One of which was left with the Canonico Recupero, and the other we carried along with us. The former our friend affures us, had no fensible variation during our absence. We both lest it and found it at 29 inches 8 lines and a half, English measure. On our arrival at Catania, the one we carried up our with us had rifen again exactly to the fame has weight you please Ber unforcerately the upstrion

I have likewife a good quickfilver thermome ter, which I borrowed from the Neapolitan philosopher, the Padre della Torre, who furnished us with letters for this place, and would have accompanied us, could he have obtained leave of the king. It is made by Adams at Loudon, and (as I myfelf proved) exactly graduated from the two points of freezing and boiling water. It is upon Farenhait's scale. I shall mark the heights in the different regions of Atna, with the rules for estimating the elevation of mountains by the barometer, which, I am forry to fay, have been and hitherto to very ill afcertained. Cassini, Bouguer, and the others who have written on this subject to the reproach of science, differing so much amonest themselves, that it is with difficulty we can come mear the truth.

Ætna has been often meafured, but I believe never with any degree of accuracy; and it is really a strame to the Society established in this place. · 1

called

called the Ætnean academy, whose original inftitution was to fludy the nature and operations of this wonderful mountain. It was my full intention to have measured it geometrically; but I am forry to fay, although this is both the feat of an academy and university, yet there was no quadrant to be had. Of all the mountains I have ever feen, Ætna would be the easiest to measure, and with the greatest certainty, and perhaps the properest place on the globe to establish an exact rule of menfuration by the barometer. There is a breach of a vast extent, that begins exactly at the foot of the mountain, and runs for a great many miles along the coast. The sea-mark of this beach forms the meridian to the fummit of the mountain. Here you are fure of a perfect level, and may make the base of your triangle of what length you pleafe. But unfortunately this menfuration has never been executed, at least with

any tolerable degree of precision.

Kircher pretends to have measured it, and to have found it 4000 French toises in height; which is more than any of the Andes, or indeed than any mountain upon earth. The Italian mathematicians are still more absurd. Some of them make it eight miles, some six, and some four. Amici, the last, and I believe the best who has made the attempt, reduces it to three miles, 264 paces; but even this must be exceedingly erroneous; and probably the perpendicular height of Ætna does not exceed 12000 feet, or little more than two miles. I shall mark the different meand you may chuse which you please. I believe the allowance in all of them, particularly in great elevations, where the air is fo exceedingly thin and light, is much too small. Mikeli, whose mensurations are esteemed more exact, has ever found it fo. Cassini allows, I think, ten French toiles

toifes of elevation, for every line of mercury, adding one foot to the first ten, two to the second, three to the third, and so on: But surely the weight of the air diminishes in a much great-

er proportion. ded et ald high

Bouguer takes the difference of the logarithms of the height of barometer in lines (supposing these logarithms to consist only of five figures); from this difference he takes away a 30th part, and what remains he supposes to be the difference of elevation. I do not recollect his reason for this supposition; but the rule feems to be still more erroneous than the other, and has been entirely laid aside. I am told, that accurate experiments have been made at Geneva, to establish the menfuration with the barometer; but I have not been able to procure them. M. de la Hire allows twelve toises, four feet, for the line of Mercury: And Picart, one of the most exact of the French academicans, fourteen toiles, or about ninety English feet.

Height of Farenheit's Thermometer.	britis
At Catania, May 26, at mid-day	76
Ditto, May 27, at five in the morning	7
At Nicolofi, 12 miles up the mountain,	期益。
mid-day and -An one 2 sealing adultions	73
At the cave, called Spelonca del Capriole,	y Sur Fin
in the fecond region, where there was	
fill a confiderable quantity of fnow, at	ing se
feven at night	61
In the same cave at half an hour past eleven	52
At the Torre del Filosofo, in the third re-	111
gion at three in the morning.	341
At the foot of the crater of Ætna .	33
About half-way up the crater	29
On the fummit of Ætna, a little before fun-	
is rife and the constant from the second second	27
HOUSE AND BEHILD TO SELECT THE LEED OF THE	

Height

Height of the barometer in inches and l	ines	•
At the sea-side at Catania At the village of Piedmonte, in the first re-	29	81
gion of Ætna	27	The Part of
At Nicolofi, in the fame region At the Castagno de Cento Cavalsi, in the	SO LAND THE RESIDEN	13
fecond region At the Spelonca del Capriole, in the fecond	26	5½
region	24	2
At the Torre del Filosofo, in the third region	20	5
At the foot of the crater		43
Within about 300 yards of the fummit At the fummit of Atna (supposed to be	19	61/2
about The wind at the fummit was fo violer	19	THE PARTY OF THE P

The wind at the fummit was so violent that I could not make the observation with perfect exactness; however, I am pretty certain that it was within half a line.

I own I did not believe we should find Ætna so high. I had heard indeed that it was higher than any of the Alps, but I never gave credit to it.—How great then was my assonishment to find that the mercury sell almost two inches lower than I had ever observed it on the very highest of the accessible Alps; at the same time I am persuaded there are many inaccessible points of the Alps, particularly (Mont Blanc) that are still much higher than Ætna.

I found the magnetical needle greatly agitated near the summit of the mountain; (the Padre della Torre told me, he had made the same observation on Vesuvius) however, it always fixed at the north point, though it took longer time in fixing than below. But what Recupero told me happened to him, was very singular.—Soon after the eruption of 1755, he placed his compass on the lava. The needle, he says, to his great astonishment, was agitated with much violence for some

I 2

confiderable

confiderable time, till at last it entirely lost its magnetical power, flanding indifcriminately at every point of the compais; and this it never after recovered, till it was again touched with the loadstone.

The wind and my unfortunate fprain together, in a great measure prevented our electrical ex-periments, on which we had built not a little; however, I found that round Nicolofi, and particularly on the top of Montpelieri, the air was in a very favourable state for electrical operations. Here the little pith balls, when infulated, were fenfibly affected and repelled each other above an inch. I expected this electrical state of the air would have increased as we advanced on the mountain; but at the cave where we flept, I could observe no such effect. Perhaps it was owing to the exhalations from the trees and vegetables, which are there exceedingly luxuriant; whereas about Nicolofi, and round Montpelieri, there is hardly any thing but lava and dry hot fand .-Or yerhaps it might be owing to the evening being farther advanced, and the dews beginning to fall. However, I have no doubt, that upon thefe mountains, formed by eruption, where the air is strongly impregnated with fulphureous effluvia, great electrical discoveries might be made. And perhaps, of all the reasons assigned for the wonderful vegetation that is performed on this mounttain, there is none that contributes fo much towards it, as this constant electrical state of the air: For from a variety of experiments it has been found that an increase of the electrical matter adds much to the progress of vegetation. It probably acts there in the same manner as on the animal body;—the circulation we know is personned quicker; and the juices are driven through the small vessels with more ease and celerity. This has often been proved from the immediate removal of obstructions by electricity; and probably the rubbing with dry and warm flanuel, esteemed so estications in such cases, is doing nothing more than exciting a greater degree of electricity in the part; but it has likewise been demonstrated, by the common experiment of making water drop through a small capillary syphon, which the moment it is electrified runs in a full stream.—

I have indeed, very little doubt, that the fertility of our seasons depend as much on this quality in the air, as either on its heat or moisture.

Electricity will probably foon be confidered as the great vivifying principle of nature, by which fhe carries on most of her operations. It is a fifth element, diffinct from, and of a superior nature to the other four, which only compose the corporeal parts of matter: But this subtil and active fluid is a kind of foul that pervades and quickens every particle of it. When an equal quantity of this is diffused through the air, and over the face of the earth, every thing continues calm and quiet; but if by any accident one part of matter has acquired a greater quantity than another, the most dreadful consequences often enfue before the equilibrium can be restored.-Nature feems to fall into convultions, and many of her works are destroyed:-All the great phænomena are produced; thunder, lightning, earthquakes, and whirlwinds; for, I believe, there is little doubt, that all these frequently depend on this fole cause. And again, if we look down from the sublime of nature to its minutiæ, we shall still find the same power acting; though perhaps in less legible characters; for as the knowledge of its operations is still in its infancy, they are generally mifunderstood, or ascribed to some other cause. However, I have no doubt, that in process

process of time, these will be properly investigated; when mankind will wonder how much they have been in the dark. It will then possibly be found, that what we call fenfibility of nerves and many of those diseases that the faculty have as yet only invented names for, are owing to the body's being possessed of too large or too small a quantity of this subtil and active fluid; that very fluid, perhaps, that is the vehicle of all our feelings; and which they have so long searched for in vain in the nerves: For I have sometimes been led to think, that this fense was nothing else than a flighter kind of electric effect, to which the nerves serve as conductors; and that it is by the rapid circulation of this penetrating and animating fire that our fensations are performed. We all know, that in damp and hazy weather, when it feems to be blunted and absorbed by the humidity; when its activity is loft, and little or none of it can be collected; we ever find our spirits more languid and our fensibility less acute; but in the firocc wind at Naples, when the air feems totally deprived of it, the whole system is unstrung, and the nerves feem to loofe both their tension and elasticity, till the north or west wind awakens the activity of this animating power, which foon restores the tone, and enlivens all nature, which feemed to droop and languish during its absence.

It is likewise well known, that there have been instances of the human body becoming electric without the meditation of any electric substance, and even emitting sparks of fire with a disagree able sensation, and an extreme degree of nervous sensibility.

About seven or eight years ago, a lady in Switzerland was affected in this manner, and though: I was not able to learn all the particulars of her

case, yet several Swiss gentlemen have confirmed to me the truth of the story. --- She was uncommonly fensible of every change of weather, and had her electrical feelings strongest in a clear day, or during the passage of thunder-clouds, when the air is known to be replete with that fluid: Her case, like most others which the Doctors can make nothing of, was decided to be a nervous one, for the real meaning of that term I take to be only, that the physicians does not understand what it is.

Two gentlemen of Geneva had a short experience of the fame fort of complaint, though still in a much superior degree.—Professor Saussure and young Mr. Jalabert, when travelling over one of the high Alps, were caught amought thunderclouds; and to their utter aftonishment, found their bodies so full of electrical fire, that spontaneous flashes darted from their fingers with a crackling noise, and the same kind of sensation as when strongly erectrified by art.-This was communicated by Mr. Jalabert to the academy of Sciences at Paris, I think, in the year 1763; and you will find it recorded in their memoirs.

It feems pretty evident, I think, that thefe feelings were owing to the bodies being poffelled of too great a share of electric fire. This is an uncommon case; but I do not think it at all improbable, that many of our invalids, particularly the hypochondriac, and those we call Malades Imaginaires, owe their disagreeable feelings to the opposite cause, or the bodies being possessed of too small a quantity of this fire; for we find that a diminution of it in the air feldom fails to increase

their uneasy sensations, and vice verfa.

Perhaps it might be of fervix to these people to wear some electric substance next their skin, to defend the nerves and fibres from the damp, or non-electric

non-electric air. I would propole a waistcoat of the finest flannel, which should be kept perfectvoly clean and dry; for the effluvia of the body in reale of any violent perfpiration, will foon deltroy This chectric quality: This should be covered by another of the same fize of filk The animal Theat, and the friction that exercise must occasion of betwixt these two substances, produce a powerful electricity; and would form a kind of electric atmolphere around the body, that might possibly be one of the best preservatives against the effect of caps and their pins, might they not ledmaton

As for our Swifs lady, I have little doubt that her complaints were owing in great part, perhaps entirely to her drefs; and that a very small alteration, almost in any part of it, would effectually have cured her. A lady who has her shead furstarounded with wires, and her hair fluck full of metal pins, and who at the fame time stands upon undry filk, is to all intents and purposes an electribacal conductor infolated, and prepared for collectas ing the fire from the atmosphere. And it is not at dotall furprising, that during thunder forms, or be when the air is extremely replete with electrical of matter the should emit sparks, and exhibit other a appearances of electricity. I imagined a very vintrifling change of drefs, which from the conflant so versatility of their modes may some day take place, stilwould render this lady's difease altogether epideas varical amongsto the fex. Only let the foles of rebtheir shoes be made of an electric substance, fand grilet the wires of their caps, and pins of their hair, redbe fomewhate lengthened and pointed outwards; relanded think there is little doubt, that they will ofmotensfind themselves in an electrified state: But, inon deed, safe athey only wear filks or even sworfted motionings, it may fometimes prove of ifficient; for do Il have often impolated electrometers as perfectly the

by placing them on a piece of dry filk or flannel, the med that well, on buch mould, bashely quesette

mi villow little do our ladies imagine, when they ve furround their heads with wire, the most powery ful of all conductors; and at the fame time wear flockings, shoes, and gowns, of filk one of the most powerful repellents, that they prepare their bodies in the same manner, and according to the fame principles as electricans prepare their coned ductors for mattracting the fire of lightning! If they cannot be brought to relinquish their wire caps and their pins, might they not fall upon fome fuch preservative as those which of late years have been applied to objects of less conse--91 quence? very some bus

Suppose that every lady should provide herself with a fmall chain or wire, to be hooked on at to pleasure during thunder-storms. This should pass from her cap over the thickest part of her hair, which will prevent the fire from being communicated to her head; and fo down to the ground. is will act in the same maner as to the conductors on the tops of steeples, which for from the metal spires that are commonly placed there, analogous to the pins and wires, were fo liable to accidents. You may laugh at all this, but I affure you I was never more ferious in my life. A very amiable lady of my acquaintance, Mrs. Douglas of Kelfo, had almost lost her life by one of these caps mounted on wire. She was buffanding dat an open window during a thunder form: The lightning was attracted by the wire, shand the cap was burnt to afhes, happily her do hair was in its natural state, without powder, pomatum, or pins; and prevented the fire from botheing a conducted to ther head; for as the felt no orkind of flock, it is probable that it went off from the wires of the cap to the wall, close to which fhe

fhe then stood. If it had found any conductor to carry it to her head or body, in all probability fhe must have been killed .-- A good strong head of hair, if it is kept perfectly clean and dry, is probably one of the best preservatives against the fire of lightning. But so soon as it is stuffed full of powder and pomatum, and bound together with pins, its repellent force is loft, and it becomes a conductor.*—But I beg pardon for these furmises: I throw them in your way. only for you to improve upon at your leifure: For we have it ever in our power to be making experiments in electricity. And although this fluid is the most subtil and active of any we know, we can command it on all occasions; and I am now fo accustomed to its operations, that I feldom comb my hair, or pull off a flocking, without observing them under some form or other. How furprifing is it then, that mankind should

Experiments on the electricity of hair; which tend fill to convince him the more of what he has advanced. A lady had told him, that on combing her hair in frosty weather, in the dark, she had sometimes observed sparks of fire to issue from it. This made him think of attempting to collect the electrical fire from hair alone, without the assistance of any other electrical apparatus. To this end, he desired a young lady to stand on a cake of bees-wax, and to comb her sister's hair, who was sitting on a chiir before her.—Soon after she began to comb the young lady on the wear was greatly assonished to find her whole body electrified; darting out sparks of fire against every object that approached her. The har was extremely electrical, and associated an electrometer at a very great distance. He charged a metal conductor from it with great ease; and in the space of a few minutes collected so much fire immediately from the hair, as to kindle common sprits: and by means of a small phial gave many smart shocks to all the company. A full account of these experiments was lately read before the Royal Socie's. They were made during the time of a very hard first, and on a strong head of hair, where no provider or pomatum had been used for many months.

have lived and breathed in it for so many thousand years, without almost ever supposing that it existed! But to return to our mountain.

Recupero told me he had observed the same phænomenon here that is common in the eruptions of mount Vesuvius, viz. red forked lightning darting from the fmoke, without being followed by the noise of thunder. The reason possibly is, that the crater and smoke is at that time so highly electrical, that like a cylinder or globe, heated by friction, it throws off spontaneous flashes into the air, without being brought into the attraction of any conductor, or body less electric than itself: (indeed the fpontaneous discharges from a good electrical globe, often bear a perfect resemblance to this kind of lightning: however, if a non-electric cloud were to pass near the crater at that time, the crash of thunder would probably be very violent, which indeed is often the case when the air is full of wet clouds in the time of an eruption; but when this does not happen, the equilibrium is probably restored by degrees, and without any shock, from the furplus of electrical matter being gradually communicated to the earth and fea all around the mountain; the immense lavas that have run from it, ferving as conductors.

So highly electric is the vapour of volcanos, that it has been observed in some eruptions both of Atna and Vesuvius, that the whole track of smoke, which sometimes extended above 100 miles, produced the most dreadful essects; killed shepherds and slocks on the mountains; blassing trees, and setting fire to houses; where-ever it met with them on an elevated situation. Now probably the slying of a kite, with a wire round its string, would soon have disarmed this formidable cloud. These essects, however, only happen when the air is dry and little agitated, but when it is full of most vapour, the

great rarefaction from the heat of the lava generally brings it down in violent torrents of rain, which food convey the electrical matter from the clouds to the earth, and restores the equilibrium.

As Recupero, who is a facetious and an agreeable companion, was kind enough to fit a good deal with me during my confinement, I have gathered my remarks from his conversation, that may

perhaps be worthy of your attention.

The variety of waters about Ætna, he tells me is surprising. I have already mentioned the Fiume Freddo, or the river of Acis: Recupero confirms what I had been told of it. There is a lake on the north of the mountain, of about three miles in circumference, which receives several considerable rivers; yet, although there is no apparent out-let, it never overflows its banks. I suggested the probability of a subterraneous communication betwixt this and the Fiume Freddo. He said there was no resemblance in the quality of their waters; however, I think it is probable, that in a course of so many miles, through the caverns of Ætna, full of salts and minerals it may acquire both its cold and its vitriolic qualities.

There is another lake on the top of a mountain to the west of Atna, the bottom of which could never be found. It is observed never either to rise or fall, but always to preserve the same level. It is undoubtedly the crater of that mountain, (which is all of burnt matter) converted into a lake. The river which supplies the baths of Catania is of a very different; nature: It never continues the same, but is perpetually changing. Its current is for the most part confined under ground by the lavas; but sometimes it bursts out with such violence that the city has suffered greatly from it; and what wis still more unfortunate, these cruptions are generally followed by some epidemical distemperal It has now been constantly diminished for

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these two years past, and is at present almost reduced to nothing. They are in perpetual dread of its breaking out, and laying waste their fields, as it has so often done before. What is singular, it generally bursts out after a long tract of the driest and warmest weather. The Atmean academy have never been able to account for this circumstance. I think it is most probable that it rises from the melting of the snow on Atma, but I shall not pretend to say how. These, perhaps, over-filling the caverns that usually receive their water, the

furplus is carried off into this river. 1 10 1000014

The river of Alcantara certainly takes its rife from the melting of these snows. Its waters, I observed, are of the same whitish colour as all the rivers are, that run from the Glacieres amongst the Alps. There are several periodical springs on Ætna, that flow only during the day, and flop during the night. These are naturally and easily accounted for from the melting of the fnow; for it melts only during the day, being hard frozen every night, even in the hottest season. There are likewife a variety of poisonous springs, some of fo deadly a quality, that birds and beafts have been found lying dead on their banks, from having drunk of the water. But (what is still more fingular) Recupero told me, that about twenty years ago, a rent opened in the mountain, that for a confiderable time fent forth fo mephitie a vapour, that like the lake Avernus, birds were fufficiated inpplies the baths of Catania istiravo gnightini

There are many caverns where the air is for extremely cold, that it is impossible to support it for any time. These the peasants make use of as reservoirs for the snow; and indeed they make the finest ice houses in the world, preserving it hard frozen during the horsest summers. It would be endless to give an account of all the caverns, and other curious appearances about Ætna. Kir-

cher speaks of a cave which he saw, capable, he says, of containing 30,000 men. Here, he adds, numbers of people have been lost from their temerity in going too sar. One of these caverns still retains the name of Proserpine, from its being supposed by the antients, the passage by which Pluto conveyed her into his dominions; on this occasion Ovid describes Ceres as searching for her daughter, with two trees which she had plucked from the mountain, and lighted by way of torches. These he calls Teda, which is still the name of a tree, I have seen no where but on mount Atna. It produces a great quantity of rosin, and was surely the most proper tree Ceres could have pitched upon for her purpose. The rosin is called Catalana, and is esteemed a cure for sores.

I have mentioned the great variety of flowers, trees, &c. on mount Ætna. I have found a long lift of them in Massa; but as I am not acquainted with the Sicilian names, I can make little out of it. I have engaged a person here to procure me a collection of their feeds in the feafon. I find of the number, cinnamon, farfeparilla, faffafras, rhubarb, and many others that I thought had not been natives of Europe. The Palmo Christi too, that plant fo much celebrated of late from the feed of which the castor oil is made, grows both here and in many other places of Sicily, in the greatest abundance. Our botanists have called it Ricinus Americanus, supposing it only to be produced in that part of the world. A Bath phyfician, I remember, has lately-written a treatife on this plant, and the virtues of the oil extracted from its feed, which he makes a fort of Catholicon. You may believe we shall not leave Sicily without providing ourselves with a quantity of this precious feed.

Mount Ætna, I find, is as much celebrated by the ancients as the moderns, for the variety of its odoriferous productions. Plutarch says, their smell was fo strong, that on many places of the mountain it was impossible to hunt. I shall transcribe the passage as it before me in an old translation I have borrowed: " Circum Atnam in Sicilia ne-" minem ferunt cum canibus venatum iri; quia " enim multos perpetuo illic ut in viridario prata, " collesque flores mittunt a fragrantia, que cam " oram occupat, obfuscare serarum anhelationes, " &c." Arittotle has likewise a passage to the very fame purpo e; but this may suffice.

There were formerly a variety of wild beafts in the woody regions of Atna; but notwithstanding this advantage they had over the dogs and hunters, the number of these is now greatly reduced. They have still however the wild boar, the roebuck, and a kind of wild goat; but the race of flags, which was much celebrated, as well as that of bears, is thought to be extinct. Several places of the mountain are still named from those animals.

The horses and cattle of mount Ætna were esteemed the best in Sicily. The cattle are still of a large fize, and have horns of fuch a length, that they are preserved as curiofities in some museums. The horses, I am afraid, have degenerated.

There are faid to be quantities of porcupines and land-tortoises on some parts of Atma; but we had not the good fortune to meet with any of them. Neither did we see any eagles or vultures, which are likewise said to be inhabitants of this mountain.

The accounts given of mount Ætna by the old Sicilian authors, (feveral of whom I have borrowed from Recupero) are very various. Some of them describe the hollow of the crater as being seven or eight miles in circumference, fome make it five, and others only three. And probably all of them are right; for I find, by all their accounts, that geherally once in about 100 years, the whole crater

has fallen down into the bowels of the mountain: That in process of time, a new crater is seen peeping out of the gulph; which perpetually increasing by the matter thrown up, is by degrees raised again to its ancient height, till at last becoming too heavy for its hollow foundations, it again gives way, and at once finks down into the mountain. This happened about 100 years ago, in the year 1669, as recorded by Borelli, whose account of it I have before me. "Universum cacumen, quod ad instar speculæ, seu " turris, ad ingentum altitudinem elevabatur, quod " una cum vasta planitie arenosa depressa, atque ab-" forpta est in profundam voraginem, &c." The fame likewise happened in the year 1536, as recorded by Fazzello and Filoteo; and in the year 1444, 1329, and 2167. Of all these I have read an account; but probably betwixt the two last mentioned, there has been another that is not recorded. as the intervals betwixt all the rest are pretty nearly equal.

Some of them give a dreadful account of it. Folcando, one of their historians, tell us, it shook the whole island, and resounded through all its shores. And their poet Errico says, on the same occasion.

- " Sode il suo gran mugito,
 " Per mille piagge e lidi."
- "The bellowing dire a thousand lands resound, "Whose trembling shores return the dreadful found."

In all probability, this event will very foon happen, as the circumference of the crater is no where recorded to have been reduced to less than three miles; and Recupero says, it is at present only three miles and a half; besides, 100 years, the common period, has now elapsed since its last fall.

There

There are many stories of people perishing by their temerity, in being too curious spectators of the eruptions of this mountain; but there are fill many more, of those that have been miraculously faved by the interpolition of some saint or the virgin, who are fupposed to be in a perpetual state of warfare with the devils in mount Ætna. That part of the island where Ætna stands, has ever been named il Val Demoni, from the frequent apparitions of these devils. It makes one third of the island. The other two are named the Val di Noto, and the Val di Mazzara.

There is one flory, though a very old one, that is still related at Catania: it is taken notice of by Seneca, Aristotle, Strabo, and others. In the time of a great eruption, when the fire was pouring down upon the city, and every one was carrying off his most valuable effects; two rich brothers, named Anfinomus and Anapias, neglecting all their wealth, escaped from the conflagration with their aged parents on their backs. These authors add, that the fire, respecting such filial piety, spared them, whilst many others that took the fame road were confumed.

This action has been wonderfully extolled, and proves, I think, that feats of this kind were by no means common in those days .-- Now, pray, don't you think, in the world at present, bad as it is supposed to be, there are few sons, who would not have acted in the fame manner; and fure I am, the rest of mankind would not have made such a sufer about it. Humanity and natural affection, I believe, in those ages we are inclined to extol so much, were not by many degrees fo powerful as they are at present, Even the pions Aneas himself, one of the most renowned of all their heroes, was in effect but a favage, notwithstanding all that Virgil fays to perfuade us of the contrary; for you find him facrificing his weak and captive enemies, at the fame time that he is canting and preaching up piety and justice.

These two brothers were so celebrated for this action, that there was a dispute betwixt Syracuse and Catania, which of these cities had given them birth; and temples were erected in both of them, dedicated to Filial Piety, in memory of the event.

In the accounts of the more recent destructions of Catania, there occurs no instance of this fort.

—We find them only lamenting the loss of priests and nuns, and very much out of humour at their saints, for allowing the devils to get the better of them. I have been a good deal entertained with some of those authors.—Selvaggio, one of their poets, speaking of the terrible earthquake in the year 1169, that destroyed Catania, and buried multitudes of people in the ruins, describes it in the following manner, which may serve as a specimen of the poetry of that time:

"Cataneam doleo, dolor est, miserabile dictu: Clara potens antiqua fuit; plebe, milite, clero, Divitiis, auro, specie, virtute triumphis, Heu terræ motu ruit illa potentia rerum! Morte ruit juvenis, moritur vir sponsa, maritus. Unde suberbit homo? Deus una diruit hora Turres, ornatus, vestes, cunclosque paratus. In tanto gemitu periit pars maxima gentis, Proh dolor! et monachi quadraginta quatuor et plus: Et periit pastor patriæ, pater ipse Johannes Pontiscalis honor, lux regni sic periere."

But another, Gustanavilla, one of their historians, gives a very different account of this affair; as it is likewise somewhat curious in its way, I shall copy it for your amusement; "In omnem terram, et in since orbis terræ jam exiit plaga illa, qua nuper in Sicilia percussi sunt Catanenses in vigilia B. "Agathæ; cum episcopus ille damnatissimus, qui, sicut

" sicut scitis, sibi sumpsit honorem, non vocatus a

"Domino, tanquam Aaron, et qui ad sedem illam, non electione canonica, sed Giezitica venalitate intravit; cum, inquam abominationis offerret

" incensum, intonuit de cœlo Dominus, et ecce

"terræ, motus factus est magnus; angelus enim Domini percutiens episcopum in surore Domini cum populo, et universa civitate subvertit."

He adds, that if St. Agatha's veil had not been produced, the angel of the Lord was in such a sury, that he would not have left one soul alive.

There is a curious painting of the great eruption in 1669, in the cathedral of this place. It is but indifferently painted, but gives a dreadful idea of that event. Borrelli, who was upon the spot, defcribes it.—He fays, on the 11th of March, fometime before the lava burst out, after violent earthquakes and dreadful subterraneous bellowing, a rent was opened in the mountain twelve miles long: in fome places of which, when they threw down stones, they could not hear them strike the bottom. He fays, that burning rocks, fixty palms in length, were thrown to the distance of a mile; and that the giants, supposed to be buried under mount Ætna, feemed to have renewed their war against Heaven: That stones of a lesser size were carried upwards of three miles; and that the thunder and lightning from the fmoke was fcarce less terrible than the noise of the mountain. He adds, that after the most violent struggles and shaking of the whole island when the lava at last burst through, it sprung up into the air to the height of 60 palms. In short, he defcribes that event, as well as the universal terror and consternation it occasioned, in terms full of horror. For many weeks the fun did not appear, and the day feemed to be changed into night. Soon after the lava got vent, which was not till four months from the time that the mountain began to K 2 labour.

CAS MILLS STRATEGICAL

labour, all these dreadful symptoms abated, and it

was foon after perfectly quiet.

He fays, this deluge of fire, after destroying the finest country in Sicily, and sweeping away churches, villages, and convents, broke over the losty walls of Catania, and covered up five of its bastions with the intervening curtains. From thence pouring down on the city, it destroyed every object it met with, overwhelming and burying all in one promiscuous ruin.

What he regrets most, was some precious remains of antiquity; the names, the situation, and even the memory of whose existence, is now lost in the place. He mentions an amphitheatre, which he calls Colliseo, the Circus Maximus, the Naumachia,

and feveral temples.

A C. H.

An account of this great eruption was fent to Charles II. by Lord Winchelsea, who was then returning from his embassy at Constantinople, and stopped here on purpose to see so remarkable an event. But his Lordship had not been at that pains to examine it we could have wished. His curiosity was satisfied in one day; and he seems to have been contented only to look at the lava at a great distance; but did not think of examining its source, or ascending the mountain, altho' at that time all the most formidable circumstances of the eruption were already over.

I should not finish this account of mount Ætna, without saying something of the various sables and allegories to which it has given rise; but it would probably lead me into too vast a field, and give this more the air of a differtation than a letter or a journal. These you will easily recollect. They have afforded ample employment for the muse, in all ages, and in all languages; and indeed the philosopher and natural historian have sound, in the real properties of this mountain, as ample a

fund

fund of speculation, as the poets have done in the fictitious.-It is so often mentioned by the ancient writers, that it has been faid of Ætna as well as of Greece orthob isite and to accurate with avel sid

freely country in Saily, Saud arconing away Nullum est sine nomine saxum."

foreywalks of Caranta and covered up fire of its Indeed, I am afraid this faying was much more applicable to it formerly than it is at present; for we even found feveral large mountains that had no name; and it does not at all appear, that the number of philosophers in Sicily have by any means increafed in the latter ages. Their ambition is now changed; and if they can get a faint to keep the devils of Ætna in order, they trouble themselves very little about the cause of its operations; and do not value their island half so much for having given birth to Archimedes or Empedocles, as to St. Agatha and Sr. Rofolia.

The antients, as well as the moderns, feem ever to have confidered Ætna as one of the highest mountains on the globe. There are many passages in their authors that shew this; though perhaps, none more strongly than their making Deucalion and Pyrrha take refuge on the top of it, to fave themselves from the universal deluge*. The second and the best fits feet

I shall now conclude this long account of mount Ætna with Virgil's celebrated description of it in the. third Æneid, which has been fo much admired. You may compare it with the following description of the famous poet Raitano, held, I affure you, in full as high estimation by the Sicilians.

de blat à les root qui on prolevire de bluove de la la la Nel mezzo verso l'ethere avviccina Ætna la fronte sua cinta di orrori, nos A have afforded ample complete ment for the totale

he'sll ages, and in all languages; and indeed the 11* Cataclysmus, quod nos diluvium dicimus, cum factus eft, omne genus humanum interiit præter Deucalionem et Pyrrham, qui in enontem Ætnam qui altissimus in Sicilia esse dicitur sugerunt, &c.

E con ispavantevole rovina
Rimbomba, e con orribili fragori.
Sovente negri nubi al ciel destina
Fumanti di atro turbine, e di ordori,
Ergi globbi di siammi, e su lambisce
Le stelle omai con infuocate striscie;
Scogli, e divelte viscere di monte
Erruttando tal volta avido estolle;
E con gemiti vomita, e con onte
Liquifatti macigni, e in sondo bolle."

So fings the Sicilian muse.—You will not however hesitate to give the preserve to the Roman one, although the former is evidently stolen from her.

"——Horrificis juxta tonat Ætna ruinis, Interdumque atram prorumpit ad æthera nubem, Turbine fumantem piceo et candente favilla, Attolitque globos flammarum, et sidera lambit. Interdumque scopulos, avolsaque viscera montis Erigit eructans, liquesactaque saxa sub auras Cum gemitu glomerat, sundoque exæstuat imo."

But both these have been greatly out-done by the wonderful imagination of our great countryman Sir Richard Blackmore; who accounts at once for the whole phænomena of Ætna, by the simple idea of given the mountain a fit of the colic: A thought that had escaped all the poets and philosophers of antiquity, and seems for ever to have been reserved for the profound genius of this great master and father of the Bathos.—I have forgot the passage; but you will find it, I think, in prince Arthur.

The philosophical poet, Lucretius has likewise mentioned the eruptions of Mount Ætna; but Pindar is the oldest poet we know of, that has taken any notice of them. His description is, I think, the most

fatisfactory

fatisfactory of all, and conveys a clearer idea both of the mountain itself, and an eruption of the mountain, than either the Roman or Sicilian poet, though it is not near so much laboured, nor worked up with all that variety of circumstances, they have found means to introduce. Its greatest fault is, that Pindar had still kept in view that absurd idea of the ancients, that Jupiter had buried the giants under mount Ætna; and that their struggling to get loose was the cause of its eruptions: But even this he touches but slightly, as if ashamed to give such a reason. The passage is translated into English by Mr. WEST.

"Now under smoking Cuma's sulph'rous coast,
And vast Sicilia, lies his tortur'd breast.
By snowy Ætna, nurse of endless frost,
The mighty prop of heaven for ever prest,
Forth from whose slaming caverns issuing rise
Tremendous fountains of pure liquid fire,
Which veil in ruddy mists the noon-day skies
While wrapt in smoke the eddying slames aspire;
Or gleaming thro the night with hideous roar,
Far o'er the red'ning main huge rocky fragments
pour."

This passage decides what has been much disputed, that Atna was in these early ages, of as great an elevation as at present. It has been alledged, that volcanos always increase in height till they are extinguished, when they are supposed to moulder down, and by degrees sink into the caverns that are below them, like the astruni, and the solfaterra at Naples: However we find that Atna was at that time as now, covered with eternal snows, and was supposed, like Atlas, to be one of the great props of heaven. But what pleases me the most in this description is, that it proves beyond the possibility

of a doubt, that in these very remote eruptions it was common for the lavas of Ætna to run a great way out to sea.—The conclusion, I think, is fully as just, and perhaps not less sublime, than the "avolsaque viscera montis erigit eructans" of Virgil, which, I must own I think rather comes too near Sir Rich-

ard's fit of the colic.

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Thucydides speaks of three eruptions of this mountain; but is not so particular as we could have wished. He does not mention the date of the first; but says it was the earliest after the arrival of the Greeks in Sicily. The second happened about the time of the 77th Olympiad, and the last in that of the 88th, which was nearly about the period when Pindar wrote, so that we cannot doubt that his description is taken from the accounts he had heard of some of those eruptions, the circumstances of which, no doubt, at that time, had afforded matter of conversation, all over Greece.

I think we may now try to take leave of Atna, though I am afraid, during the remainder of our expedition, we shall meet with nothing worthy to succeed it.—We shall sail from hence to-morrow morning; and expect to sleep at Syracuse, as it is only about fifty miles distant. I shall write you again from the ruins of that celebrated city. Farewell.

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L E T T E R XII.

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Distance 1619 got comon sadion Syracufe, June aft.

ON the 31st of May we embarked on board a felucca, and fet fail for the mighty Syracufe. The wind was favourable, and for some time we went at a great rate. The view of mount Ætna, for the whole of this little voyage, is wonderfully fine, and the bold black coast formed for near thirty miles, of the lava of that immense volcano, gives the most awful idea of its eruptions. There is no part of this coast nearer than thirty miles to its summit; and yet there has hardly been any great eruption, where the lava has not reached the fea, and driven back its waters to a great distance, leaving high rocks and promontories, that for ever fet its waves at defiance, and prescribe their utmost limits. What a tremendous scene must the meeting betwixt these adverse elements have formed!

We may eafily conceive the variety of changes this coast has undergone in the space of some thoufands of years, as every great eruption must have made a confiderable difference.-Virgil is wonderfully minute and exact in his geography of Sicily; and this is the only part of the island that seems to be materially altered fince his time. He fays there was a very large port at the foot of Ætna, where ships were secure from every wind; " Portus ab accessu " ventorum immotus et ingens;" of which, at prefent, there are not the least remains. It is probable the fame that was called by the Sicilians the port of Ulysses; which is often mentioned by their writers. -The place of its existence is still shewn betwixt three and four miles up the country, amongst the lavas

lavas of Ætna. However, I can see no fort of reafon why they have called this the port of Ulysses: For surely Homer does not bring this heroe near the precincts of mount Ætna. Indeed I think it is evident, that this volcano did not burn during the time of Homer, nor for some ages preceding it, otherwise it is not possible, that he would have said so much of Sicily, without taking any notice of so great and capital an object, which, of all others, the daring and sublime imagination of Homer would have been the most eager to grasp at.—It is evident, from his account, that Ulysses landed at the west end of Sicily, opposite to the island of Lachaea, now Favignana, almost two hundred miles distant from this

port.

Virgil, with more judgment lands his heroe at the foot of Ætna, which gives him an opportunity of introducing some of the finest descriptions in the Aneid. But it is somewhat odd, that here he makes Æneas find one of Ulysses's companions, who had escaped the rage of Polyphemus, and had lived for feveral months in the woods and caverns of this' mountain.—Virgil must have been aware of this impropriety, as he well knew that Homer had landed Ulysses, and placed the cave of Polyphemus at the most distant point of the island. But he could not prevail on himself to pass mount Atna. He was fo thoroughly convinced, that this was the most proper landing place for an epic heroe, as well as the most proper habitation for the Cyclops that, by a bold poetical licence, he has fairly taken it for granted, that Homer really made it fo. Indeed, in this passage, the pleasure he affords to the imagination of his reader makes ample amends for his having imposed on his judgement. But to return to our voyage.

The view of the mountain from the fea is more complete and fatisfactory than any where on the

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island. The eye takes in a greater portion of the circle, and you observe, with more distinctness, how it rises equally on all sides, from its immense base, overspread with the beautiful little mountains I have mentioned; and at once can trace the progress of vegetation from its utmost luxuriance, to where it is checked by the two extremes of heat and of cold.—The different regions of the mountain are distinctly marked out, by their different colours, and different productions; exposing at once to the ravished eye every climate, and every season with all their variety;

"Where bloffoms, fruits, and flowers together rife,

" And the whole year in gay confusion lies."

The first region exhibits every object that characterises summer and autumn; the second, those of a most delightful spring; the third, an eternal and unrelenting winter; and the sourth, to complete the contrast, there gions of unextinguishable fire.

The circumference of the great base of Atna, Recupero told me, he had been at a good deal of pains to ascertain; as it had generally been computed only at a hundred miles, or little more, although the radii of that circle had ever been efteemed at thirty of those miles; an absurdity in computation that had put him upon making this inquiry. The refult was, that taking the supposed distances of one place from another, all the way round, the fum of the whole amounted to one hundred and eighty-three miles; an immense circle surely, and which is still enlarged by every confiderable eruption. The whole of this circle is formed of lava and burnt matter; and I have observed, that near the very outermost borders of it, there have been many little eruptions that have pierced through fome of the thickest lavas of Ætna. These small eruptions, at fo vast a distance from the great furnace of the mountain, are probably occasioned by the intense heat of the lava, which continues for many years rarifying the air, in the caverns it has run over, which bursting forth from its prison, the lava finks down, and kindling the sulphur and nitre with which these caverns are filled, exhibits in miniature

the phænomena of a great eruption.

There is a large fandy beach that extends from the mouth of the river Simetus, a great way to the South of Catania, and was probably continued the whole way to the foot of the mountain of Taurominum, (where there are still some remains of the east end of it) till it was broken in upon many thousand years ago by the lavas of Ætna; which, from a flat sandy shore, have now converted it into a high, bold, black iron coast. What is a strong proof of this;—in many places where they have sunk deep wells; after piercing through the lava, they have at last come to beds of shells and sea sand.

There is nothing very interesting in the voyage from Catania to Syracuse. If you will read the conclusion of the third book of the *Eneid*, you will find a much better description of it than any I can give you. The coast lies low, and, except Ætna,

there are no very firiking objects.

We passed the mouths of several rivers: The first and most considerable is the Giarreta, or river of St. Paul, formerly the Simetus; and under that name celebrated by the poets. The nymph, Thalia, after her amour with Jupiter, is supposed to have been changed into this stream; and, to avoid the resentment of Juno, sunk under ground near mount Atna, and continued her subtervaneous course to the sea. This river was navigable in the time of the Romans, and Massa says, the only one in the island that was so. It takes its rise on the north side of Atna and surrounding the west skirts of the mountain, salls into the sea near the ruins of the antient Morgantio.

Morgantio. It no longer finks under ground as it did formerly; but it is now celebrated for a quality it does not appear to have possessed in the times of antiquity, as none of the old writers take notice of it. It throws up near its mouth great quantities of fine amber: This is carefully gathered by the peafants in the neighbourhood, and brought to Catania, where it is manufactured into the form of crosses, beads, saints, &c. and is sold at high prices to the superflitious people on the continent. We bought several of these respectable figures, and found them electrical in a high degree; powerfully attracting feathers, straws, and other light bodies; fomewhat emblematical, you will fay, of what they represent.—Some pieces of this amber contain flies and other infects curiously preserved in its substance; and we were not a little entertained with the ingenuity of one of the artists, who has left a large blue-bottle-fly, with its wings expanded, exactly over the head of a faint, to represent, he told us, lo sprito santo descending upon him. I have got some fine pieces of this amber, more electorie, I think, and emitting a stronger smell, than that which comes from the Baltic. The generation of this fubstance has long been a controverted point amongst naturalists: nor do I believe it is as yet ascertained, whether it is a sea or a land production. It is generally supposed to be a kind of gum or bitumen, that iffues from the earth in a liquid flate, at which time the flies and other infects that light upon it are caught, and by their struggles to get loofe, foon work themselves into its substance. which hardening round them, they are for ever preferved in the greatest perfection. Large fine pieces are constantly found at the mouth of the Simeters. fupposed to have been brought down by the river; but it is fingular, that none of it is ever found any where but on the fea-shore: They have likewise here

here a kind of artificial amber, made, I am told, from copal; but it is very different from the natural.

Not far from the mouth of this river there are two of the largest lakes in Sicily; the Beviere, and the Pantana; the first of which is supposed to have been made by Hercules; in consequence of which it was held sacred by the ancients. They are full of a variety of fish; one species of which, called Molletti, is much esteemed: the salting and exportation of these makes a considerable branch of commerce at Leontini, which is in that neighbourhood; that city is one of the most ancient in the island, and is supposed to have been the habitation of the Lestrigons.

The Leontine fields have been much famed for their fertility: Both Diodorus and Pliny affert that they yielded wheat an hundred fold, and that grain grew spontaneously here without culture: But this was only during the reign of Ceres, and is not now

the cafe.

In a few hours failing we came in fight of the city of Augusta, which is beautifully situated in a small island that was formerly a peninsula: It was therefore called by the Greeks Chersonesus. Both the city and fortifications seem considerable, and are said to contain about 9000 inhabitants.—The ruins of the Little Hybla, so celebrated for its honey, lie

within a few miles of this place.

Some time before our arrival at Syracuse, it sell a dead calm, and we spied a fine turtle sast asseep on the surface of the water. Our pilot ordered a profound silence, and only two oars to row very gentle, that if possible we might surprise him.—Every thing was put in order, and two men were placed ready at the prow to secure the prize.—We were all attention and expectation, and durst hardly breathe for sear of disturbing him.

We moved flowly on, and the turtle lay flone fill:

still; the two men bent down their bodies, and had their arms already in the water to seize him.-No alderman, with all deference be it spoken, ever beheld his turtle upon the table with more pleasure and security; nor feasted his imagination more lufciously upon the banquet.—He was already our own in idea, and we were only thinking of the various ways in which he should be dressed-whenhow vain and transitory all human possessions! the turtle made a plunge, slipped thro' their fingers, and disappeared in a moment, and with him all our hopes. We looked very foolish at each other. without uttering a word, till Fullerton asked me in the most provoking manner in the world, whether I would chuse a little of the callipath or the callipee. The two men shrugged up their shoulders. and faid Pazienza; but Glover told them in a rage. that all the pazienza on earth was not equal to a good turtle.

Soon after this the remains of the great Syracuse appeared; the remembrance of whose glory, magnificence, and illustrious deeds both in art and arms, made us for fome time even forget our turtle. But alas! how are the mighty fallen! This proud city, that vied with Rome itself, is now reduced to a heap of rubbish; for what remains of it deserves not the name of a city. We rowed round the greatest part of its walls without seeing a human creature; those very walls that were the terror of the Roman arms; from whence Archimedes battered, their fleets, and with his engines lifted their veffels out of the fea, and dashed them against the rocks. We found the interior part of the city agreed but too well with its external appearence. There was not an inn to be found; and after vifiting all the monafteries and religious fraternities in fearch of beds, we found the whole of them fo wretchedly mean and dirty, that we preferred at last to sleep on straw;

but even that we could not have clean, but were eat

up with vermin of every kind.

We had letters for the Count Gaetano, who made an apology that he could not lodge us, but in other respects shewed us many civilities; particularly in giving us the use of his carriage, in explaining the ruins, in pointing out every thing that was worthy of our attention; and likewise in giving us letters of recommendation for Malta. He is a gentleman of good sense, and has written several treatises on

the antiquities of Sicily.

Of the four cities that composed the ancient Syracuse, there remains only Ortigia, by much the fmallest, situated in the island of that name. It is about two miles round, and supposed to contain about 14000 inhabitants. The ruins of the other three, Tycha, Acradina, and Neagoli, are computed at twenty two miles in circumference, but almost the whole of this space is now converted into rich vineyards, orchards, and corn-fields; the walls of these are indeed every where built with broken marbles full of engravings and infcriptions, but most of them defaced and spoiled. The principal remains of antiquity are a theatre and amphitheatre; many fepulchres, the Latomie, the catacombs, and the famous ear of Dionysius, which it was impossible to destroy.—The Latomie now make a noble subterraneous garden, and is indeed one of the most beautiful and romantic spots I ever beheld. Most of it is about one hundred feet below the level of the earth, and of on incredible extent. The whole is hewn out of a rock as hard as marble, composed of a concretion of the shells, gravel, and other marine bodies. The bottom of this immense quarry, from whence probably the greatest part of Syracuse was built, is now covered with an exceeding rich foil; and as no wind from any point of the compass can touch it, it is filled with a great variety of the finest shrubs and fruit-trees, which bear with

vast luxurience, and are never blasted. The oranges, citrons, bergamots, pomegranates, figs, &c. are all of a remarkable fize and fine quality. Some of these trees, but more particularly the olives, grow out of the hard rock; where there is no visible foil; and exhibit a very uncommon and pleasing appearance.

There is a variety of wild and romantic scenes in this curious garden; in the midft of which we were furprifed by the appearance of a figure under one. of the caverns, that added greatly to the dignity and folemnity of the place.—It was that of an laged man, with a long flowing white beard that reached down to his middle. His old wrinkled face and feanty grey locks pronounced him a member of fome former age as well as of this. His hands, which were shook by the palfy, held a fort of pilgrim's staff; and about his neck there was a string of large beads with a crucifix hanging to its end. Had it not been for these marks of his later existence, I don't know but I should have asked him, whether in his youth, he had not being acquainted with Theocritus and Archimedes, and if he did not remember the reign of Dionysius the tyrant. But he faved us the trouble by telling us he was the hermit of the place, and belonged to a convent of Capuchins on the rock above; that he had now bid adieu to the upper world, and was determined to fpend the test of his life in this folitude, in prayer for the wretched mortals that inhabit it.

This figure, together with the scene in which it appears, are indeed admirably well adapted, and reflect a mutual dignity upon each other. We lest some money upon the rock:—For the Capuchins, who are the greatest beggars on earth, never touch money, but save their too tender consciences, and preserve their vows unbroken, by the simple device of listing it with a pair of pinchers, and carrying it to market in their sack or cowl. This I have seen

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more than once.—We were much delighted with the Latomie, and left it with regret: It is the very fame that has been fo much celebrated by Cicero about 1800 years ago; "Opus est ingens (says he) magni"ficum regum, ac tyrannorum. Totum ex saxo in "imrandam altitudinem depresso, &c." A little to the west of it is supposed to have stood the country-house, the sale of which you will remember he gives so lively and pleasant an account of; by which a goldsmith, (I have forgot his name) cheated a Roman nobleman in a very ingenious manner.

The ear of Dionysius is no less a monument of the ingenuity and magnificence, than of the cruelty of that tyrant. It is a huge cavern cut out of the hard rock, in the form of the human ear. The perpendicular height of it is about 80 feet, and the length of this enormous ear is not less than 250. The cavern was faid to be fo contrived, that every found made in it, was collected and united into one point, as into a focus; this was called the Tympanum; and exactly opposite to it the tyrant had made a fmall hole, which communicated with a little apartment where he used to conceal himself. He applied his own ear to this hole, and is faid to have heard distinctly every word that was spoken in the cavern below. This apartment was no fooner finished, and a proof of it made, than he put to death all the workmen that had been employed in it. He then confined all that he suspected were his enemies; and by over-hearing their conversation, judged to their guilt, and condemned and acquitted accordingly.

As this chamber of Dionysius is very high in the rock, and now totally inaccessible, we had it not in our power to make proof of this curious experiment, which our guides told us had been done some years ago by the Captain of an English ship.

The echo in the ear is prodigious; much superior

to any other cavern I have feen. The holes in the rock, to which the prisoners were chained, still remain, and even the lead and iron in feveral of them. We furprized a poor young porcupine who had come here to drink, of whom our guides made lawful prize. -- Near to this there are caverns of a great extent, where they carry on a manufactory of nitre, which is found in vast abundance on the sides of these caves.

The amphitheatre is in the form of a very excentric ellipse, and is much ruined; but the theatre is fo entire, that most of the gradini or seats still remain. Both these are in that part of the city that was called Neapoli, or the New City. "Quarta " autem est urbs (says Cicero) quæ quia postrema adificata est, Neapolis nominatur, quam ad sum-" mam theatrum est maximum, &c." However, it is but a small theatre in comparison of that of Taurominum. We fearched amongst the sepulchres, several of which are very elegant, for that of Archimedes; but could see nothing resembling it. At his own defire it was adorned with the figure of a sphere inscribed in a cylinder, but had been lost by his ungrateful countrymen, even before the time that Cicero was quæstor of Sicily. It is pleasant to obferve, with what eagerness this great man undertakes the fearch of it, and with what exultation he defcribes his triumph on the discovery." " Ego " autem cum omnia collustrarem oculis (est enim ad " portas Agragianas magna frequentia fepulchro-" rum) animadverti columnellam non multum e "dumis eminentem, in quæ inerat fyhære figura et " cylindri. Atque ego statim Syracufanis (erant " autem principes mecum) dixi, meillud ipfum " arbitrari esse quod quærerem. Immissi cum fal-"cibus multi purgarunt, et aperuerunt locum; quo " cum patefactus esset aditus ad adversam basim " accessimus; apparebat epigramma exesis posteri-" oribus

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" oribus partibus versiculorum dimidiatis sere: Ita " nobilissima Græciæ civitas, quondam vero etiam " doctissima sui civis unius acutissimi monumentum " ignorasset, nisi ab homine Arpinatedidicisset, &c."

The cataeombs are agreat work; little inferior either to those of Rome or Naples, and in the same stile. There are many remains of temples. The duke of Montalbano, who has written on the antiquities of Syracuse, reckons near twenty, but there is hardly any of these that are now distinguishable. A sew time columns of that of Jupiter Olympus still remain; and the temple of Minerva (now converted into the cathedral of the city, and dedicated to the Virgin) is almost entire. They have lately built a new sacade to it, but I am asraid they have not improved on the simplicity of the antique. It is full of broken pediments, and I think in a badstile.

Ortigia, the only remaining part of Syracuse, was antiently an island; it is often denominated such by Virgil, Cicero, and many of the Greek and Latin historians. In latter ages, and probably by the ruins of this mighty city, the strait that separated it from the continent, was filled up; and it had now been a peninsula for many ages; till the present king of Spain, at a vast expence, cut through the neck of land that joined it to Sicily, and has again re-

duced it to its primitive state.

Here he has raifed a noble fortification, which appears to be almost impregnable. There are four strong gates, one within the other, with each a glacis, covered way, scarp and counterscarp, and a broad deep ditch filled with sea-water, and defended by an immense number of—embrasures;—but not so much as one single piece of artillery. This you will no doubt think ridiculous enough, but the ridicule is still heightened, when I assure you there is not a cannon of any kind belonging to this noble

noble fortress, but one small battery of fix pounders for saluting ships that go in and out of the port. If you are at a loss to account for this, you will please to remember that it is a work of the king of Spain. However the ditches are very useful; they are perpetually covered with fishing boats; and they can use their nets and lines here with the greatest success, even in the most stormy weather; though I dare say this was none of the motives that induced his majesty to make them. The nobility of the place have likewise barges here, for their amusement.

As the celebrated fountain of Arethufa has ever been looked upon as one of the greatest curiosities of Syracuse, you may believe we were not a little impatient to examine it: And indeed only by observing Cicero's account of it, * we soon found it out.—It still exactly answers the description he gives, except with regard to the great quantities of fish it contained, which seem now to have abandoned it.

The fountain of Arethusa was dedicated to Diana, who had a magnificent temple near it, where great sessivals were annually celebrated in honour of the goddess. We found a number of nymphs, up to the knees in the fountain, busy washing their garments, and we dreaded the sate of Actaon and Alpheus: But if these were of Diana's train, they are by no means so coy as they were of old; and a man would hardly chuse to run the risk of being changed either into a stag or a river for the best of them.

It is indeed an altonishing fountain; and rifes at once out of the earth, to the fize of a river.—The poetical fictions concerning it are too well known to require that I should enumerate them. Many of the

^{*} In hac insula extrema est sons aquæ dulcis, cui nomen Arethusa est, incredibili magnitudine plenissimus piscium, qui stuciu totus operiretur, nisi munitione, ac mole lupidum a mari disjunctus esset, &c.

the people here believe to this day, that it is the identical river Arethufa, that finks under ground near Olympia in Greece, and continuing its course for five or fix hundred miles below the ocean, rises again in this spot.

It is truly aftonishing that such a story as this should have gained such credit amongst the antients, for it is not only their poets, but natural historians and philosophers too, that take notice of it. Pliny mentions it more than once; and there are sew or none of the Latin poets that it has escaped.

This strange belief has been communicated to the Sicilian authors, and, what is amazing, there is hardly any of them that doubts of it.—Pomponius Mela, Pausanias, Massa, and Fazzello, are all of the same sentiments; to support which they tell you the old story of the golden cup won at the Olympic games, which was thrown into the Grecian Arethusia, and was soon after cast up again by the Sicilian one.

They likewise add, that it had always been obferved that after the great sacrifices at Olympia, the blood of which fell into that river, the waters of Arethusa rose for several days tinged with blood asm

This, like many modern miracles, was probably a trick of the priests.—Those of Diana had the charge of the fountain of Arethusa, and no doubt were much interested to support the credit of the story; for it was that goddess that converted the nymph Arethusa into a river, they conducted her by subterraneous passages from Greece to Sicily, to avoid the pursuit of Alpheus, who underwent the same sate.

At a little distance from the fountain of Arethusa, there is a very large spring of fresh water, that boils up in the sea. It is called Occhio di Zilica, and by some Alpheus, who is supposed by the poets to have pursued Arethusa below the sea all the way to Sicily.

As this spring is not taken notice of by anyiof the great number of the antients that speak of Arethu-

fa, it is most probable that it did not then exist; and is a part of that fountain that has since burst out before its arrival at the island of Ortigia. Had it been visible in the time of the Greeks, there is no doubt that they would have made use of this, as a strong argument to prove the submarine journey of Arethusa; as it in tact rises at some distance in the sea, and pretty much in the same direction that Greece lies from Ortigia. It sometimes boils up so strongly, that after piercing the salt water, I am told it can be taken up very little affected by it.

Syracuse has two harbours; the largest of which, on the south west side of Ortigia, is reckoned fix miles round, and was esteemed one of the best in the Mediterranean. It is said by Diodorus to have run almost into the heart of the city, and was called Marmoreo, because entirely surrounded with buildings of marble; the entry into this harbour was strongly sortified, and the Roman sleets could never

penetrate into it.

The small port is on the north-east of Ortigia, and is likewise recorded to have been highly ornamented. Fazzello says, there is still the remains of a submarine aqueduct, that runs through the middle of it, which was intended to convey the water from the sountain of Arethusa to the other parts of

the city, about add me

Near this port, they shew the spot where Archimedes' house stood; and likewise the tower from whence he is said to have set fire to the Roman galleys with his burning glasses: a story which is related by several authors, but which is now almost universally exploded from the difficulty to conceive a burning-glass, or a concave speculum, with a socus of such an immense length as this must have required.

However, I should be apt to imagine if this be not entirely a siction (of which there is some probability)

bability) that it was neither performed by refracting burning-glasses nor speculums, but only by means of common looking-glasses, or very clear plates of metal. Indeed, from the fituation of the place it must have been done by reflection; for Archimedes' tower stood on the north of the little port where the Roman fleet are faid to have been incored; fo that their vessels lay on a right line betwixt him and the fun at noon; and at a very fmall diffrance from the wall of the city where this tower stood. But if you will suppose this to have been performed by common burning glasses, or by those of the parabolical kind, it will be necellary to raise a tower of a most enormous height on the island of Ortigia, in order to interpose these glasses betwint the fun and the Roman galleys; and even this could not have been done till late in the afternoon, when his rays are exceedingly weak. But I have very little doubt that common looking-glasses would be found all fufficient to perform these effects.

Let us suppose that a thousand of these were made to reflect the rays to the fame point; The heat, in all probability, must be increased to a greater degree than in the focus of most burning-glasses; and abundantly capable of fetting fire to every combustible fubstance. This experiment might be easily made by means of a battalion of men, arming each with a looking-glass instead of a firelock; and setting up a board at two or three hundred yards distance for them to fire at. I suppose it would take a considerable time before they were expert at this exercise; but, by practice, I have no doubt that they might all be brought to hit the mark inflantaneously at the word of command; like the lark-eatchers in fome countries, who are fo dextrous at this manceuvre, that with a small mirrour they throw the rays of fight on the lark, let her be ever fo high in the air; which, by a kind of fascination, brings down the

poor animal to the spare,

corded

You may laugh at all this; but I don't think it is impossible that a looking-glass may one day be thought as necessary an implement for a foldier as at prefent it is for a beau. I am very apprehensive the French will get the flart of us in this fignal invention; as I have been affured long ago, that few of their men ever go to the field, without first providing themselves with one of these little warlike engines, the true use of which, happily for us, they are as yet unacquainted with. You will eafily perceive, that if this experiment succeeds it must alter the whole system of fortification, as well as of attack and defence; for every part of the city that is exposed to the view of the befiegers, may be easily fet in a flame; and the besieged would have the same advantage over the camp of the belieging army.

which of all the wretched places we have yet met with, is by many degrees the most wretched. For besides that its inshabitants are so extremely poor and beggarly, many of them are so over run with the itch, that we are under perpetual apprehensions, and begin to be extremely well satisfied that we could not procure beds.—It is truly melancholy to think of the dismal contrast that its former magnificence makes with its present meanness. The mighty Syracuse, the most opulent and powerful of all the Grecian cities, which, by its own proper strength alone, was able, at different times, to contend against all the power of Carthage and of Rome:—which is re-

* Since the writing of these letters, the author has been informed, that Mr. Buffon actually made this experiment.—He constructed a kind of frame, in which were fixed four hundred small mirrours, disposed in such a manner, that the rays restected from each of them fell exactly on the same point. By means of this, he melted lead at the distance of 120 feet, and set fire to a hay-stack at a much greater distance.

corded (what the force of united nations is now incapable of) to have repulsed sleets of two thousand sail, and armies of two hundred thousand men; and contained within its own walls, what no city ever did before or since, sleets and armies that were the terror of the world. This haughty and magnificent city, reduced even below the consequence of the most insignificant burgh!—"Sic transit gloria mundid."—I have not even been able to procure a table to write upon, but by way of succedaneum amobligated to lay a form over the back of two chairs.—We have got into the most wretched hovel you can conceive, and the most dirty; but what is still worst of all, we can find nothing to eat; and if we had not brought some cold sowls along with us, we might have starved.

The heat has been considerably greater here than at Catania. The thermometer is just now at 78.—
There is an old remark made on the climate of this place by some of the antients; which is still said to hold good: That at no season, the sun has ever been invisible during a whole day at Syracuse. I find it mentioned by several Sicilian authors, but shall not vouch for the truth of it.—Adieu.—My next will probably be from Malta; for we shall sail to-mor-

row if it be possible to procure a vessel.

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noteles of the arm.
About ten o clock the wind became lavourable, when we went indeed at a numeric rate. At twelve is bless a higherance, and with four dillicative went to be undershore, but the wind was to exceedingly along that even there are hed like to have been overless, and we were obliged to run a ground to fave and we were obliged to run a ground to fave along the state of the state o

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theoringen bun vidgust Capo Paffero, June 3.

As we found the mighty city of Syracuse so reduced, that it could not afford beds and lodging to three weary travellers, we agreed to abridge our slay in it; and accordingly hired a Maltese Sparonaro to carry us to that island: This is a small six-oar'd boat, made entirely for speed, to avoid the Asrican pirates, and other Barbaresque vessels, with which these seas are infested, but so flat and so narrow, that they are not able to bear any sea, and of consequence

keep always as near the coast as possible.

On the 2d of June, by day break, we left the Marmoreo, or great port of Syracuse, and although the wind was exactly contrary and pretty strong, by the force of their oars, which they manage with great dexterity, we got on at the rate of sour miles an hour. They do not pull their oars as we do, but push them like the Venetian Gondoliers; always fronting the prow of the boat, and seldom or never sit down while they row; allowing the whole weight of their bodies to be exerted every stroke of the oar.—This gives a prodigious momentum, and is certainly more forcible than a simple exertion of the muscles of the arm.

About ten o'clock the wind became favourable, when we went indeed at a immense rate. At twelve it blew a hurricane, and with some difficulty we got under shore, but the wind was so exceedingly violent, that even there we had like to have been overset, and we were obliged to run a-ground to save us from that disaster. Here we were a good deal annoyed by the sand carried about by the wind; however.

however, the hurricane was foon over, and we again put to fea with a favourable gale, which in a few

hours carried us to Capo Passero.

In this little storm we were a good deal amused with the behaviour of our Sicilian fervant, who at laud is a fellow of undaunted courage, of which we have had many proofs; but here (I don't know why) it entirely for look him; although there was in fact no real danger, for we never were more than 100 yards from the shore. He gave himself up to despair, and called upon all his faints for protection: And never again recovered his confidence all the rest of this little voyage: perpetually wishing himself back at Naples, and fwearing that no earthly temptation fhould ever induce him to go to fea again. The fame fellow, but a few days ago, mounted a most vicious horse, and without the least fear or concern galloped along the fide of a precipice, where every moment we expected to fee him dashed to pieces; to fingular and various are the different modes of fear and of courage.

Capo Passero, antiently called Pachinus, is the remotest and most southerly point of Sicily. It is not a peninsula, as represented in all the maps, but a wretched barren island, of about a mile round; with a fort and a small garrison to protect the neighbouring country, from the incursions of the Barbary corsairs, who are often very troublesome on this part of the coast. This little island and fort lie about a mile and a half distant from the small creek of which we have taken possession, and are separated from the rest of Sicily by a strait of about half a

mile broad.

Our pilot told us that we must not think of Malta, which is almost 100 miles off, till there were more settled appearances of good weather.

As there is no habitation here of any kind, we fearched about, till at last we found a small cavern,

where

where we made a very comfortable dinner. We then fallied forth to examine the face of the country, as well as to try if we could shoot something for our supper.—We sound that we had now got into a very different world from any thing we had yet seen. The country here is exceedingly barren, and to a considerable distance produces neither corn nor wine: But the fields are adorned with an infinite variety of flowers and of flowering shrubs, and the rocks are every where entirely covered with capers which are just now sit for gathering. If we had vinegar, we could soon have pickled hogsheads of them.

We found here, in the greatest persection, that beautiful shrub called the Palmeta, resembling a small palm-tree, with an elegant sine slower: But to our great mortification, the seed is not yet ripe. We likewise found great quantities of a blue everlasting slower, which I do not remember to have seen in Miller, or any of our botanical books. The stem rises about a foot high, and is crowned with a large cluster of small blue slowers, the leaves of which are of a dry substance like the Elychrysum, or globe Amaranthus. Some of these are of a purple colour, but most of them blue. I have gathered a pretty large quantity for the speculation of the botanists on our return.

We found a good swimming-place, which is always one of the first things we look out for, as this exercise constitutes one of the principal pleasures of our expedition.

As foon as it was dark, we got on board our little boat and rowed about an hundred yards out to fea, where we cast anchor; our pilot assuring us that this was absolutely necessary, as the people in this part of the country are little better than savages; and, were we to stay at land, might very possibly come down during the night, and rob and murder us. He likewise told us, that the Turks had made frequent invasions upon this point of the island, which, or all others, lay most exposed to their depredations; that lately three of their chebecks ran into a small harbour a few miles from this, and carried off fix merchant ships; and that very often, some of their light vessels were seen hovering off the coast; that the only way to be in persect security from these two enemies by sea and land, was to choose a place on the coast so deep, that the banditti by land could not wade into us; and at the same time so shallow, as to be equally inaccessible to the banditti by sea.

When we found ourselves thus in security on both hands we wrapt ourselves up in our cloaks, and sell asseep: However we had but a very uncomfortable night; the wind rose, and the motion of our little bark was exceeding disagreeable, and made us heartily sick. As soon as day began to appear, we made them pull into shore; when we were immediately cured of our sickness; and as the weather continues still unfavourable, we have fallen upon

a variety of amusements to pass the time.

We have been thrice in the water, which is warm and pleasant, and in the intervals, I have writ you this letter on the top of a large basket, in which we carry our sea-store. We have likewise gathered shells, pieces of coral, of spunge, and several beautiful kinds of sea-weed. The rocks here are all of sand and gravel run together, and become as hard as granite. There are many shells and other matrine substances mixed in their composition, which renders them objects of curiosity in the eye of a naturalist.

This morning we made a kind of tent of a fail, drawn over the point of a rock, and fixed with an oar, by way of pole. Here we breakfasted most luxuriously on excellent tea, and honey of Hybla.

I was interrupted in this part of my letter, by an officer from the fort of Capo Passero. He tells us, that we may give over all thoughts of getting farther for these fix days.—What do you think is his reason? I own I was in some pain till be mentioned it.—This wind set in exactly as the moon entered her second quarter, and it will certainly continue till she is full.—There is a rascal for you!—If he be telling truth, I shall certainly study astrology. He likewise told us, that two galliots had been seen off the coast; and desired us to be upon our guard; but I own, the moon, together with other circumstances, has considerably weakened his evidence with me.

We have learned from his conversation, that the fort of Capo Passero is made use of as a place of exile for the delinquents in the army; of which number I have not the least doubt that he is one. He told us there were two near relations of the viceroy, that had been lately sent there for misdemeanors; that for his part, he belonged to a very agreeable garrison; but as he loved retirement, he chose to accompany them. However, his countenance told a very different story; and said, in strong language that he was a tres mauvais sujet. Besides, he is a stupid fellow, and has tired me. I could learn nothing from him.

It must be owned, this is an excellent place of exile for a young rake, who wants to shew away in the beau monde. It is not within many miles of any town or village; so that the gentlemen may en

joy retirement in its utmost perfection.

We were surprized to find on this coast quantities of the true pumice stone, which at first we supposed to have been brought by the sea from Atna, till we likewise discovered many large pieces of lava, which makes us imagine there must have been some eruption of fire in this part of the island; yet I see noconical mountain, or any other indication of it.

If our officer's prognoffications prove true, and we are detained here any longer, I shall examine the country to a much greater diltance. The wind continues directly contrary; the fea is very high in the eanal of Malta, and our Sieilian fervant is in a fad trepidation.—But I fee Glover and Fullerton coming for their dinner; fo I shall be obliged to give up the balket .- This fea-air gives one a monstrous appetite; and, it is with grief I mention it, we are already brought to thort allowance:--Only one cold fowl amongst three of us; all three pretty sharp set, I assure you. Those infamous rascals to lofe our turtle!—They have spied a fishing-boat, and are haling her as loud as they can roar, but alas! The is too far off to hear them. They have just fired a gun to bring her to, and happily she obeys the figual, fo there is still hopes; otherwise we shall soon be reduced to bread and water. Our tea and fugar too are just upon a close, which is the cruellest article of all; but we have plenty of good bread and Hybla honey; fo we are in no danger of starving.

We have likewise made an admirable and a very comfortable disposition for our night's lodging. The Sparonaro is fo very narrow, that it is impossible for us all to lie in it; besides, we are eat up with vermin, and have nothing but the hard boards to lie on: All these considerations, added to the cursed fwinging of the boat, and the horrid fickness it occasions, have determined us rather to trust ourselves to the mercy of the banditti, than to lie another night at fea: Besides, we have made the happiest difcovery in the world; a great quantity of fine, foft, dry fea-weed, lying under the shelter of a rock, and feems intended by Providence for our bed: Over this we are going to firetch a fail, and expect to fleep most luxuriously; but to prevent all danger from a furprile, we have agreed

to fland fentry by turns, with Fullerton's doublebarrelled gun, well primed and loaded for the reception of the enemy; at the first discharge of which, and not before, the whole guard is to turn out, with all the remaining part of our artillery and small arms; and as our fituation is a very advantageous one, I think we Thall be able to make a flout defence.

As we are fix in number, three masters and three fervants, the duty you fee, will be but trifling; and five of us will always fleep in fecurity. Our guard, to be fure, might have been stronger; but our Sparonaro men have absolutely refused to be of the party; having much more confidence in their own element; however, they have promised, in case of an attack, immediately to come to our asfistance. I think the disposition is far from being a bad one; and we are not a little vain of our generalship.

The fishing-boat is now arrived, and they have brought some excellent little fishes, which are already on the fire. Adieu. These fellows are roaring for their cold fowl, and I can command the basket

no longer.

Ever your's.

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LETTER XIV.

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Malta, June 4th.

In spite of appearances, and our officer's wise prognostications, the wind changed in the afternoon, and we got under sail by six o'clock: We passed the Straits and coasted along till eight, when we landed to cook some macaroni we had purchased of our sailors, and try if we could shoot something for seaftore, as we have still a long voyage before us.

We came to the fide of a fulphureous lake, the smell of which was so strong, that we perceived it upwards of a mile distant. We found the water boiling up with violence in many places, though the heat at the banks of the lake is very inconsiderable. However, this, added to the pumice and lava we found near Capo Passero, tends greatly to confirm us in the opinion, that this part of the island, as well as about Ætna, has, in former ages, been subject to eruptions of fire.

I think it is more than probable, that this is the celebrated Camerina, which Eneas faw immediately after his passing Pachynus, (or Capo Passero) which, Virgil says, the Fates had decreed should never be

drained.

" Hinc altas cautes projectaque saxa Pachyni Radimus; et fatis nunquam concessa moveri

" Adparet Camarina procul."

Virgil had good reason to say so; for the level of the lake or marsh, (it being something betwixt the two) is at least as low as that of the sea, and consequently never could be drained.

It is surrounded with a variety of sine evergreens and slowering shrubs, of which the palmeta, and the arbutus or strawberry tree, are the most beautiful. We saw a great many wild-sowl; but, what surprized me, in so unfrequented a place, they were so shy, that there was no getting near them. There was one kind in particular, that attracted our attention; it was of the size and form of a grey plover, and slew in the same manner; but had a tail of a great length, which seemed to be composed only of two small slexible seathers, that made a very uncommon appearance in the air. After using all our art to shoot one of them, we were obliged to give up

the attempt.

Here we killed a fmall black fnake, which I think, answers the description I have seen of the asp. We diffected out its tongue, the end of which appears sharp like a sting, and I suppose is one, as it darted out with violence against our sticks, when we prefented them to it. Now as all animals when attacked, make use of those weapons that Nature has armed them with for their defence, it appeared evident to us, (supposing this rule a just one) that this animal was conscious of a power of hurting in its tongue; and we have been more fully convinced of it from diffection. The sting appears confiderably larger than that of a bee. We found a little bag at the other end of the tongue, and probably, if we had had a microscope, should have found the tongue perforated. The snake had no teeth; but very hard gums. I have taken care to preserve the tongue for your inspection.

As I think it has always been supposed, that serpents hurt only with their teeth, I thought this might be worthy of your notice. It is true, that the darting out of the tongue is a trick of the whole serpent tribe; but this animal seemed to do it with peculiar serocity, and to strike it with violence against our slicks. It was this that put us upon the

examination,

I don't recollect that this fingularity is mentioned in any book of natural history, but possibly I may be mistaken; nor indeed do I remember either to have feen or heard of any animal armed in this manner.-Unless you will suppose me to adopt the sentiments of poor Mr. S---, who, ever fince his marriage, alledges that the tongues of many females, are formed after this fingular manner; and remarks one peculiarity, that the sting seldom or never appears till after matrimony.-He is very learned on this subject, and thinks it may possibly have proceeded from their original connection with the ferpent. - Let this be as it may, I fincerely hope that you and I shall never have such good reason for

adopting that opinion.

A little after nine we embarked. The night was delightful; but the wind had died away about funfet, and we were obliged to ply our oars to get into the canal of Malta. The coast of Sicily began to recede; and in a short time, we found ourselves in the ocean. There was a profound filence, except the noise of the waves breaking on the distant shore, which only ferved to render it more folemn. It was a dead calm, and the moon shone bright on the waters: The waves, from the late florm, were still high; but fmooth and even, and followed one another with a flow and equal pace.—The fcene had naturally funk us into meditation; we had remained near an hour without speaking a word, when our failors began their midnight hymn to the Virgin. The music was fimple, folemn, and melancholy, and in perfect harmony with the scene, and with all our feelings. They beat exact time with their oars, and observed the harmony and the cadence with the utmost precision. We listened with infinite pleasure to this melancholy concert, and felt the vanity of operas and oratorios. There is often a folemnity and a pathetic in the modulation of these simple productions, that causes a much

much stronger effect than the composition of the greatest masters, assisted by all the boasted rules of

counter-point.

At last they fung us asleep, and we awoke 40 miles distant from Sicily. We were now on the main ocean, and faw no land but mount Atna; which is the perpetual polar star of these seas.—We had a fine breeze, and about two o'clock we discovered the island of Malta; and in less than three hours more we reached the city of Valetta. The approach of the island is very fine, although the shore is rather low and rocky. It is every where made inaccellible to an enemy, by an infinite number of fortifications. The rock, in many places, has been floped into the form of a glacis, with strong parapets and intrenchments running behind it,

The entry into the port is very narrow, and is commanded by a strong castle on either side. We were haled from each of these, and obliged to give a strict account of ourselves; and on our arrival at the fide of the key, were vifited by an officer from the health-office, and obliged to give oath with regard to the circumstances of our voyage.——He behaved in the civilest manner, and immediately fent us Mr. Rutter, the English conful, for whom

we had letters of recommendation.

On getting on shore, we found ourselves in a new world indeed .- The streets crowded with welldressed people, who have all the appearance of health and affluence; whereas at Syracuse, there. was scarce a creature to be seen; and even those few had the appearance of disease and wretchedness .-Mr. Rutter immediately conducted us to an inn, which had now the appearance of a palace. We had an excellent supper, and good Burgundy; and as this is the king's birth-day, we have almost got tipfy to his health. We are now going into clean, comfortable beds, in expectation of the fweetest flumbers

flumbers—Think of the luxury of this, after being five long days without throwing off our cloaths.—Good night. I would not lose a moment of it for the world.—People may say what they please, but there is no enjoyment in living in perpetual ease and affluence, and the true luxury is only to be attained by undergoing a few hardships.—But this is no time to philosophise. So adieu.

LETTER XV.

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Malta, June 5th.

OUR banker, Mr. Pousilach, was here before we were up, inviting us to dine with him at his country house, from whence we are just now returned. He gave us a noble entertainment, served on plate, with an elegant desert, and a great variety of wines.

After dinner we went to vifit the principal villas of the island; particularly those of the grand master, and the general of the galleys, which lie contiguous to each other. These are nothing great or magnificent; but they are admirably contrived for a hot climate, where, of all things, shade is the most desirable. The orange groves are indeed very fine, and the fruit they bear are superior to any thing you have seen either in Spain or Portugal.

The aspect of the country is far from being pleafing: The whole island is a rock of very white freestone, and the soil that covers this rock, in most places, is not more than five or fix inches deep; yet, what is singular, we sound their crop in general was exceedingly abundant.—They account for it from the copious dews that fall during the spring and summer months; and pretend likewise, that there is a moisture in the rock below the soil, that is of great advantage to the corn and cotton, keeping its roots perpetually moist and cool; without which singular quality, they say, they could have no crops at all, the heat of the sun is so exceedingly violent.

Their barley harvest has been over some time ago; and they are just now finishing that of the wheat: The whole island produces corn only sufficient to support its inhabitants for five months, or little more, but the crop they most depend upon is the cotton. They began sowing it about three weeks ago, and it will be finished in a week more. The time of reaping it is in the month of October.

and beginning of November.

They pretend that the cotton produced from this plant, which is fown and reaped in four months, is of a much superior quality to that of the cotton-tree. I compared them, but I cannot say I found it so; this is indeed the finest, but that of the cotton-tree is by much the strongest texture. The plant rises to the height of a foot and a half, and is covered with a number of nuts or pods sull of cotton: These, when ripe, they are at great pains to cut off, every morning before sun-rise; for the heat of the sun immediately turns the cotton yellow; which indeed, we saw from those pods they save for seed.

They manufacture their cotton into a great variety of stuffs. Their stockings are exceedingly sine. Some of them, they assured us, had been sold for ten sequins a pair. Their coverlits and blankets are esteemed all over Europe. Of these the principal manufactures are established in the little island of Gozzo, where the people are said to be more industrious than those of Malta, as they are more excluded from the world, and have sewer inducements

to idleness. Here the sugar-cane is still cultivated with success, though not in any considerable quan-

tity.

The Maltese oranges certainly deserve the character they have, of being the finest in the world, The feafon continues for upwards of feven months; from November till the middle of June; during which time, those beautiful trees are always covered with abundance of this delicious fruit.- Many of them are of the red kind, much superior, in my opinion, to the others, which are rather too luscious. They are produced, I am told, from the common orange bud, engrafted on the pomegranate flock. The juice of this fruit is red as blood, and of a fine flavour. The greatest part of their crop is fent in presents to the different courts of Europe, and to the relations of the chevaliers. It was not without a good deal of difficulty that we procured a few chests for our friends at Naples.

The industry of the Maltese in cultivating their little Island is inconceivable. There is not an inch of ground lost in any part of it; and where there was not soil enough, they have brought over ships and boats loaded with it from Sicily, where there is plenty, and to spare. The whole island is full of inclosures of free-stone, which gives the country a very uncouth and a very barren aspect; and, in summer, resects such a light and heat, that it is exceedingly disagreeable and offensive to the eyes. The inclosures are very small and regular, according to the inclination of the ground. This they say, they are obliged to observe, notwithstanding the deformity it occasions; otherwise the sloods, to which they are subject, would soon carry off their soil.

The island is covered over with country houses and villages, besides seven cities, for so they term them; but there are only two, the Valetta and the Citta Vecchia, that by any means deserve that appropriate the country houses.

pellation. Every little village has a noble church, elegantly finished and adorned with statues of marble, rich tapestry, and a large quantity of silver plate. They are by much the handsomest country churches I have ever seen.

But I am interrupted in my writing, by the beginning (I am told) of a very fine shew. If it be so I shall give you some account of it by and by.

Eleven at night. The shew is now finished, and has afforded us great entertainment. It was the departure of a Maltese squadron to assist the French against the Bey of Tunis, who, it seems, has fallen under the displeasure of the grand monarque, because he resused to deliver up without ransom, the Corfican flaves that were taken before the French were in possession of that island. The squadron confisted of three gallies; the largest with nine hundred men, each of the others with feven hundred; three galliots, and several scampavias, so called from their exceeding swiftness. These immense bodies were all worked by oars, and moved with great regularity. The admiral went first, and the rest in order, according to their dignity. The fea was crowded with boats, and the ramparts and fortifications were filled with company. The port refounded on all fides with the discharge of heavy artillery, which was answered by the gallies and galliots as they left the harbour. As the echo is here uncommonly great, it produced a very noble effect.

There were about thirty knights in each galley, making figuals all the way to their mistresses, who were weeping for their departure upon the bastions; for these gentlemen pay almost as little regard to their vows of chastity, as the priests and confessors do. After viewing the shew from the ramparts, we took a boat and sollowed the squadron for some time, and did not return till long after sun set.

We have been admiring the wonderful strength of this place, both by nature and art.—It is certain-

ly the happiest situation that can be imagined. The city stands upon a peninsula, betwixt two of the finest ports in the world, which are defended by almost impregnable fortifications. That on the south-east side of the city is the largest. It runs about two miles into the heart of the island, and is so very deep, and surrounded by such high grounds and fortifications, that they assured us the largest ships of war might ride here in the most stormy

weather, almost without a cable.

This beautiful bason is divided into five distinct harbours, all equally safe, and each capable of containing an immense number of shipping. The mouth of the harbour is scarcely a quarter of a mile broad, and is commanded on each side by batteries that would tear the strongest ship to pieces before she could enter. Besides this, it is fronted by a quadruple battery, one above the other, the largest of which is a stear d'eau, or on a level with the water. These are mounted with about 80 of their heaviest artillery; so that this harbour, I think, may really be considered as impregnable; and indeed the Turks have ever found it so, and I believe ever will.

The harbour on the north fide of the city, although they only use it for fishing, and as a place of quarantine, would, in any other part of the world, be considered as inestimable. It is likewise desended by very strong works; and in the center of the bason there is an island on which they have built

a castle and a lazaret.

The fortifications of Malta are indeed a most stupendous work. All the boasted catacombs of Rome and Naples are a trifle to the immense excavations that have been made in this little island. The ditches of a vast size, are all out of the folid rock. These extend for a great many miles; and raise our astonishment to think that so small a state has ever been able to make them.

One

One fide of the island is so completely fortified by nature, that there was nothing left for art. The rock is of a great height, and absolutely perpendicular from the fea for feveral miles. It is very fingular, that on this fide there are still the vestiges of leveral antient roads, with the tracks of carriages worn deep in the rocks: These roads are now terminated by the precipice, with the fea beneath; and shew to a demonstration, that this island has in former ages been of a much larger fize than it is at present; but the convulsion that occasioned its diminution is probably much beyond the reach of any historian or tradition. It has often been observed, notwithstanding the very great distance of mount. Ætna, than this island has generally been more or less affected by its eruptions, and they think it probable, that on some of those occasions a part of it may have been shaken into the sea,

We have now an opportunity of observing that one half of mount Ætna is clearly discovered from Malta. They reckon the distance near 200 Italian miles. And the people here assure us, that in the great eruptions of that mountain, their whole island is illuminated; and from the resection in the water, there appears a great track of fire in the sea all the way from Malta to Sicily. The thundering of the mountain is likewise, distinctly heard.—Good night.—I am satigued with this day's expediti-

on, and shall finish my letter to-morrow.

June 6th. As the city of Valetta is built upon a hill, none of the streets except the key are level. They are all paved with white free-stone, which not only creates a great dust, but from its colour is likewise so offensive to the eyes, that most of the people here are remarkably weak-sighted. The principal buildings are the palace of the grand-master, the infirmary, the arsenals, the inns or hotels of the Seven Tongues, and the great church of St. John. The palace

palace is a noble though a plain structure, and the grand master (who studies convenience more than magnificence) is more comfortably and commodiously lodged than any prince in Europe, the king of Sardinia perhaps only excepted. The great stair is the

easiest and the best I ever saw.

St. John's is a magnificent church. The pavement, in particular, is reckoned the richest in the world. It is entirely composed of sepulchral monuments of the finest marble, porphyry, lapis lazuli, and a variety of other valuable stones, admirably joined together, and at an incredible expence; representing in a kind of Mosaic, the arms, insignia, &c. of the persons whose names they are intended to commemorate. In the magnificence of these monuments, the heirs of the grand masters and comman-

ders have long vied with each other,

We went this day to see the celebration of their church-service. It seems to be more overcharged with parade and ceremony than what I have ever observed even in any other catholic country. The number of genussections before the altar, the kissing of the prior's hand, the holding up of his robes by the subaltern priests, the ceremony of throwing incense upon all the knights of the Great Cross, and neglecting the poorer knights, with many other articles, appeared to us highly ridiculous; and most essentially different indeed from that purity and simplicity of worship that constitutes the very essence of true Christianity; and of which the great pattern they pretend to copy, set so very noble an example.

This day (the 6th of June) is held as a thankfgiving for their deliverance from a terrible conspiracy that was formed about twenty-one years ago, by the Turkish slaves; at one stroke to put an end to the whole order of Malta. All the fountains of the place were to be poisoned; and every slave had taken

a solemn oath to put his master to death.

It was discovered by a Jew, who kept a coffeehouse. He understood the Turkish language, and overhead fome discourse that he thought suspicious. He went immediately and informed the grand mafter. The fuspected persons were instantly seized and put to the torture, and foon confessed the whole plot. The executions were shocking. One hundred and twenty-five were burned alive, some were broken on the wheel, and fome were torn to pieces by the four galleys rowing different ways, and each bringing off its limb. Since that time, the flaves have been much more firifly watched, and have less liberty than formerly. Adieu. I shall write to you again before we leave Malta.

Your's, &c.

L E T T E R XVI.

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Malta, June 7th. I HIS day we made an expedition through the island in coaches drawn by one mule each; the only kind of vehicle the place affords. Our conductors could speak nothing but Arabic, which is still the language of the common people of Malta; fo that you may believe we did not reap much benefit from their conversation. We went first to the antient city of Melita, which is near the center of the island. and commands a view of the whole; and in clear weather, they pretend, of part of Barbary, and of Sicily. The city is strongly fortified, and is governed by an officer called the Hahem. He received

us very politely, and shewed us the old palace, which is not indeed, much worth the seeing. The cathedral is a very fine church; and although of an exceeding large size, is at present entirely hung with

crimfon damask richly laced with gold.

The catacombs, not far from this city, are a great work. They are said to extend for fifteen miles under ground; however, this you are obliged to take on the credit of your guides, as it would rather be risking too much to put it to the trial. Many people, they assure us, have been lost from advancing too far in them; the prodigious number of branches make it next to impossible to find the way out

again.

From this we went to fee the Bosquetta, where the grand master has his country-palace; by the accounts we had of it at Valetta, we expected to find a forest stored with deer and every kind of game, as they talked much of the great hunts that were made every year in these woods.—We were not a little surprised to find only a few scattered trees, and about half a dozen deer; but as this is the only thing like a wood in the island, it is esteemed a very great curiosity. The palace is as little worth seeing as the forest, though indeed the prospect from the top of it is very sine. The furniture is three or four hundred years old, and in the most Gothick taste that can be imagined: But indeed the grand master seldom or never resides here.

The great source of water that supplies the city of Valetta, takes its rise near to this place; and there is an aqueduct composed of some thousand arches, that convey it from thence to the city. The whole of this immense work was finished at the private ex-

pence of one of the grand masters.

Not far from the old city there is a small church, dedicated to St. Paul; and just by the church, a miraculous statue of the saint with a viper on his hand; supposed to be placed on the very spot on

which the house stood where he was received after his shipwreck on this island, and where he shook the viper off his hand into the sire without being hurt by it: At which time the Maltese assure us the saint cursed all the venomous animals of the island, and banished them for ever; just as St. Patrick treated those of his favourite isle. Whether this be the cause of it or not, we shall leave to divines to determine, (though if it had, I think St. Luke would have mentioned it in the acts of the Apostles) but the fact is certain, that there are no venomous animals in Malta. They assured us that vipers had been brought from Sicily, and died almost immedi-

ately on their arrival.

Adjoining to the church there is the celebrated grotto in which the faint was imprisoned. It is looked upon with the utmost reverence and veneration; and if the stories they tell of it be true, it is well intitled to it all. It is exceedingly damp, and produces (I believe by a kind of petrifaction from the water) a whitish kind of stone, which they asfure us, when reduced to powder, is a fovereign remedy in many diseases, and saves the lives of thoufands every year. There is not a house in the island that is not provided with it: And they tell us there are many boxes of it fent annually not only to Sicily and Italy, but likewife to the Levant and the East-Indies: and (what is confidered as a daily flanding miracle) notwithstanding this perpetual consumption, it has never been exhausted, nor even sensibly diminished; the Saint always taking care to fupply them with a fresh quantity the day following.

You may be fure we did not fail to stuff our pockets with this wonderful stone; I suspected they would have prevented us, as I did not suppose the faint would have worked for heretics; however, neither he nor the priests had any objection; and we gave them a few Pauls * more for their civility; I tasted some of it, and believe it is a very harmless thing. It tastes like exceeding bad magnesia, and I believe has pretty much the same essets. They give about a tea-spoonful of it to children in the small-pox and in tevers. It produces a copious sweat about an hour after, and, they say, never fails to be of service. It is likewise esteemed a certain remedy against the bite of all venomous animals. There is a very sine statue of St. Paul in the middle of this grotto, to which they ascribe great powers.

We were delighted, on our way back to the city, with the beauty of the fetting-fun; much superior, I think, to what I have ever observed it in Italy. The whole of the eastern part of the heavens, for half an hour after sun-set, was of a fine deep purple, and made a beautiful appearance: This the Maltese tell us is generally the case every evening, at this

feason of the year.

I forgot to fay any thing of our presentation to the grand master, for which I ask pardon both of you and him.—His name is Pinto, and of a Portuguese family. He has now been at the head of this fingular little state for upwards of thirty years. He received us with great politeness, and was highly pleased to find that some of us had been in Portugal. He mentioned the intimate commercial connections that had so long subsisted betwixt our nations, and expressed his defire of being of fervice to us, and of rendering our flay in his island as agreeable as posfible. He is a clear-headed, fenfible, little old man; which, at so advanced a period of life, is very uncommon. Although he is confiderably upwards of ninety, he retains all the faculties of his mind in perfection. He has no minister, but manages every thing himself; and has immediate introduction for ten of twelve hours formation

interliation, and Wishout even appearing to be fa

formation of the most minute occurrences. He walks up and down stairs, and even to church, without affiltance; and has the appearance as if he would still live for many years. His houshold attendance and court are all very princely; and as grand mafter of Malta, he is more absolute, and possesses more power, than most sovereign princes. His titles are Serene Highness and Eminence; and as he has the disposal of all lucrative offices, he makes of his councils what he pleases; besides, in all the councils that compose the jurisdiction of this little nation, he himself presides, and has two votes. Since he was chosen grand master, he has already given away 126 commanderies, some of them worth upwards of 2000l. a year; besides priories and other offices of profit.—He has the disposal of twenty one commanderies, and one priory every five years; and as there are always a number of expectants, he is very much courted.

He is chosen by a committee of twenty one; which committee, is nominated by the seven nations, three out of each nation. The election must be over within three days after the death of the former grand master; and during these three days, there is scarce a soul that sleeps at Malta: All is cabal and intrigue; and most of the knights are masked, to prevent their particular attachments and connections from being known: the moment the election is over, every thing returns again to its sormer channel.

The land force of Malta is equal to the number of men in the island fit to bear arms. They have about 500 regulars belonging to the ships of war; and 150 compose the guard of the prince. The two islands of Malta and Gozzo contain about 150,000 inhabitants. The men are exceeding robust and hardy. I have seen them row for ten or twelve hours without intermission, and without even appearing to be satigued.

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Their sea-force consists of four galleys, three galliots, four ships of fixty guns, and a frigate of thirty-fix, befides a number of the quick-failing little vessels called Scampavias (literally, Runaways.) Their ships, gallies, and fortifications, are not only well supplied with excellent artillery, but they have likewise invented a kind of ordnance of their own, unknown to all the world befides. For we found, to our no small amazement, that the rocks were not only cut into fortifications, but likewife into artillery to defend these fortifications; being hollowed out in many places into the form of immense mortars. The charge is said to be about a barrel of gunpowder, over which they place a large piece of wood, made exactly to fit the mouth of the chamber. On this they heap a great quantity of cannon balls, shells, or other deadly materials: and when an enemy's ship approaches the harbour, they fire the whole into the air; and they pretend it produces a very great effect, making a shower for two or three hundred yards round that would fink any vessel.

Notwithstanding the supposed bigotry of the Maltese, the spirit of toleration is so strong, that a mosque has lately been built for their sworn enemies the Turks. Here the poor slaves are allowed to enjoy their religion in peace. It happened lately that some idle boys disturbed them during their service: they were immediately sent to prison, and severely punished. The police indeed is much better regulated than in the neighbouring countries, and assistantions and robberies are very uncommon; the last of which crimes the grand master punishes with the utmost severity. But he is said, perhaps in compliance with the prejudice of his nation, to be much

more relax with regard to the first.

Perhaps Malta is the only country in the world where duelling is permitted by law.——As their whole establishment is originally sounded on the wild and romantic principles of chivalry, they have ever found it too inconsistent with those principles to abolish duelling; but they have laid it under such restrictions as greatly to lessen its danger. These are curious enough.—The duellists are obliged to decide their quarrel in one particular street of the city; and if they presume to tight any where else they are liable to the rigour of the law. But what is not less singular, and much more in their savour, they are obliged under the most severe penalties to put up their sword, when ordered so to do, by a woman, a priest, or a knight.

Under these limitations, in the midst of a great city, one would imagine it almost impossible that a duel could ever end in blood; however, this is not the case.—A cross is always painted on the wall opposite to the spot where a knight has been killed in commemoration of his fall.—We counted about

twenty of these crosses.

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About three months ago, two knights had a difpute at a billiard-table. One of them, after giving a great deal of abufive language, added a blow; but to the assonishment of all Malta (in whose annals there is not a fimilar instance) after so great a provocation, he absolutely refused to fight his antagonist.—The challenge was repeated, and he had time to reflect on the confequences, but still he refused to enter the lists.—He was condemned to make amende honorable in the great church of St. John for forty-five days successively; then to be confined in a dungeon without light for five years, after which he is to remain a prisoner in the castle for life. The unfortunate young man who received the blow is likewise in disgrace, as he has not had an opportunity of wiping it out in the blood of his adverfary: . N 2 This

This has been looked upon as a very fingular affair, and is still one of the principal topics of conversation. The first part of the sentence has already been executed, and the poor wretch is now in his dungeon. Nor is it thought, that any abatement will be made in what remains.

If the legislature in other countries punished with equal rigour those that do fight, as it does in those that do not; I believe we should soon have an end of duelling: But I should imagine the punishment for fighting ought never to be a capital one, (but rather something ignominious;) and the punishment for not fighting should always be so, or at least some severe corporeal punishment; for ignominy will have as little effect on the person who is willing to submit to the appellation of a coward, as the fear of death on one who makes it his glory to despite buit.

The Maltese still talk with horror of a storm that happened here on the 29th of October, 1757, which as it was of a very singular nature, I shall translate you some account of it from a little book they have

Argiven me, written on that subject.

of slabout three quarters of an hour after midnight, there appeared to the fouth-west of the city a great w black cloud, which as it approached, changed its colour, till at last it became like a slame of fire mixed with black smoke, A dreadful noise was heard on its approach, that alarmed the whole city. It pafno fed over part of the port, and came first upon an English ships which in an instant wastorn to pieces, mand nothing left but the hulk; part of the masts, fails, and cordage were carried along with the cloud extende donate distance. The small boats and to fellouques that fell in its way were all broken to To pieces, and funkon. The noile increased and became ammore frightful. A centinel, terrified at its approach, run into his box: Both he and it were listed up and carried

carried into the sea, where he perished. It then traversed a considerable part of the city, and laid in ruins almost every thing that stood in its way. Several houses were laid level with the ground, and it did not leave one steeple in its passage. The bells of some of them, together with the spires, were carried to a considerable distance. The roofs of the churches were demolished and beat down, which is it happened in the day-time, must have had dreadful consequences, as all the world would immediately have run to the churches.

It went off at the north-east point of the city; and demolishing the light-house, is said to have mounted up in the air, with a frightful noise; and passed over the sea to Sicily, where it tore up some trees, and did other damage, but nothing considerable; as its sury had been mostly spent upon Malta. The number of killed and wounded amounted to near 200; and the loss of shipping, houses, and

churches, was very confiderable.

Several treatifes have been written to account for this fingular hurricane, but I have found nothing at all fatisfactory. The fentiments of the people are concise and positive. They declare, with one voice, that it was a legion of devils let loose to punish them for their sins. There are a thousand people in Malta that will take their oaths they saw them within the cloud, all as black as pitch, and breathing out fire and brimstone. They add, that if there had not been a few godly people amongst them, their whole city would certainly have been involved in one universal destruction.

The horse-races of Malta are of a very uncommon kind. They are performed without either saddle, bridle, whip, or spur; and yet the horses are said to run full speed, and to afford a great deal of diversion. They are accustomed to the ground for some

run into his nove Both le and it were litted up and

fome weeks before; and although it is entirely over rock and pavement, there are very feldom any accidents. They have races of affes and mules performed in the same manner, four times every year. The rider is only furnished with a machine like a moemaker's awl, to prick on his courfer if he is lazy biblion as had but had

As Malta is an epitome of all Europe, and an assemblage of the younger brothers, who are commonly the best, of its first families, it is probably one of the best academies for politeness in this part of the globe; befides, where every one is entitled by law as well as custom, to demand fatisfaction for the least breach of it, people are under a necessity of being very exact and circumspect, both with re-

gard to their words and actions.

All the knights and commanders have much the appearance of gentlemen, and men of the world. We met with no character in extreme. The ridicules and prejudices of every particular nation, are by degrees foftened and wore off, by the familiar intercourse and collusion with each other. It is curious to observe the effect it produces upon the various people that compose this little medley. The French skip, the German strut, and the Spanish stalk, are all mingled together in fuch small proportions, that none of them are striking; yet everyone of these nations hear a reason for any thing; and no person could still retain something of their original characteristics. It is only the exuberance of it that is wore off; and it is full easy to diffinguish the inhabitants of the fouth and north fide of the Pyrences, as well as those of the east and west side of the Rhine; for though the Parisian has, in a great measure, lost his alluming air, the Spaniard his taciturnity and folemnity, the German his formality and his pride; yet still you fee the German, the Frenchman, and the Spaniard: It is only the caricature,

cature, that formerly made them ridiculous, that

has disappeared.

This inflitution, which is a strange compound of the military and ecclefiastic, has now subsisted for near feven hundred years; and though I believe, one of the first-born, has long furvived every other child of chivalry. It possesses great riches in most of the Catholic countries of Europe; and did fo in England too, before the time of Henry VIII. but that capricious tyrant did not chuse that any institution, however antient or respected, should remain in his dominions that had any doubt of his fupremacy and infallibility; he therefore feized on all their possessions, at the same time that he euriched himself by the plunder of the church. It was in vain for them to plead that they were rather a military than an ecclefiastic order, and by their valour had been of great fervice to Europe, in their wars against the infidels: It was not agreeable to this fystem ever to hear a reason for any thing; and no person could possibly be right that was capable of supposing that the king could be wrong.

Malta, as well as Sicily, was long under the tyranny of the Saracens; from which they were both delivered about the middle of the eleventh century, by the valour of the Normans: After which time, the fate of Malta commonly depended on that of Sicily, till the Emperor Charles V. about the year 1530, gave it, together with the island of Gozo, to the knights of St. John of Jerusalem, who at that time had lost the island of Rhodes. In testimony of this concession, the grand master is still obliged, every year, to send a folcon to the king of Sicily, or his viceroy; and on every new succession, to swear allegiance, and to receive, from the hands of the Sicilian monarch, the investiture of these

two islands.

Ever fince our arrival here, the weather has been perfectly clear and ferene, without a cloud in the fky; and for some time after sun-fer, the heavens exhibit a most beautiful appearance, which I do not recollect to have observed any where selfe The eastern part of the hemisphere appears of a rich deep purple, and the western is the true yellow glow of of Claud Lorrain, that you used to admire so much. The weather however, is not intolerably hot; the thermometer flands commonly betwixt 75 and 76. Adieu. We are now preparing for a long voyage, and it is not easy to say from whence I shall write to of Calvolo, you may believe we expeded, txoue uoxe

were face but we were distappointed. It must either

s'ruoy rava en ett, ande thotime the inhabited it.

on the airchbillion of Cambray, as well as Homer, must his effactored greatly in their painting. We looked, as we went along the coast, for the grotto it Neither could we oblerve those verdant banks reternally covered with flowers; nor thole lofty trees for ever in blollom, that loft their heads in the clouds. and afford twy had go abe Terut bah at her and her nymphs. We law, indeed, tome nymphs, but as neither Calvolo nor Eucharis feemed to be of the

SEW I DEAR BECRFORD, Mrigentum, June 11th. doing apprehention about my lelemachus, lnow, doing pranoragi a ni atlam no rrog ant ral L. as we hired to convey us to this city, or a sozia O not

We coasted along the island, and went to take a view of the north-port, its fortifications, and lazazetto. All these are very great, and more like the works of a mighty and powerful people than of fo small a state. The mortars cut out of the rock are a tremendous invention. // There are about fifty of them, near the different creeks and landing places sound the island. They are directed at the most probable fpots where boats would attempt a landiguiwas acceptable: for we had the most delightful weather.

ing. The mouths of some of these mortars are about fix seet wide, and they are said to throw a hundred cantars of cannon ball or stones. A cantar is, I think, about a hundred pounds weight; so that if they do take place, they must make a dreadful havoc amongst a debarkation of boats.

The distance of Malta from Gozzo is not above four or five miles, and the small island of Commino lies betwize them. The coasts of all the three are bare and barren, but covered over with towers, redoubts and fortifications of various kinds.

As Gozzo is supposed to be the celebrated island of Calypso, you may believe we expected something very fine; but we were disappointed. It must either be greatly fallen off, fince the time she inhabited it, or the archbishop of Cambray, as well as Homer, must have flattered greatly in their painting. looked, as we went along the coast, for the grotto of the goddess, but could see nothing that resembled Neither could we observe those verdant banks it. eternally covered with flowers; nor those lofty trees for ever in blossom, that lost their heads in the clouds, and afforded a shade to the facred baths of her and her nymphs. We faw, indeed, some nymphs; but as neither Calypso nor Eucharis seemed to be of the number, we paid little attention to them, and I was in no apprehension about my Telemachus: Indeed, it would have required an imagination as ffrong as Don Quixote's to have brought about the metamore coaffed along the illagil, and went to. salong

Finding our hopes frustrated, we ordered our failors to pull out to sea, and bid adieu to the island of Calypso, concluding, either that our intelligence was false, or that both the island and its inhabitants were greatly changed. We soon found ourselves once more at the mercy of the waves! Night came on, and our rowers began their evening song to the Virgin, and beat time with their oars. Their offering was acceptable; for we had the most delightful

weather.

weather. We wrapt ourselves up in our cloaks, and slept most comfortably, having provided mattrasses at Malta. By a little after day break, we found we had got without fight of all the islands, and saw only a part of mount Etna smoking above the waters. The wind sprung up fair, and by ten

On confidering the smallness of our boat, and the great breadth of this passage, we could not help admiring the temerity of these people, who, at all seasons of the year, venture to Sicily in these diminutive vessels; yet it is very seldom that any accident happens; they are so perfectly acquainted with the weather, foretelling, almost to a certainty, every storm, many hours before it comes on. The sailors look upon this passage as one of the most stormy and dangerous in the Mediterranean. It is called the canal of Malta, and is much dreaded by the Levant ships; but indeed, at this season there is no danger.

We arrived at Sicily a little before funcet, and landed opposite to Ragusa, and not far from the ruins of little Hybla; the third town of that name in the island, distinguished by the epithets of the Great, (near mount Ætna) the Lesser, near Augusta) and the Little, (just by Ragusa). Here we found a sine sandy beach, and whilst the servants were employed in dressing supper, we amused ourselves with bathing and gathering shells, of which there is a considerable variety. We were in expectation of finding the nautilus, for which this island is samous; but in this we did not succeed. However, we picked up some handsome shells, though not equal to those that are brought from the Indies.

After supper we again launched our bark, and went to sea. The wind was savourable as we could wish. We had our nightly serenade as usual, and the next day by twelve o'clock, we reached the celebrated port of Agrigentum.

. wellsow

The

The captain of the port gave us a polite reception, and infifted on accompanying us to the city, which stands near the top of a mountain, four miles distant from the harbour, and about eleven hundred feet above the level of the fea. The road on each fide is bordered by a row of exceeding large American aloes; upwards of one-third of them being at present in full blow, and making the most beautiful appearance that can be imagined. The flower-stems of this noble plant are in general betwixt twenty and thirty feet high, (some of them more) and are covered with flowers from top to bottom; which taper regularly, and form a beautiful kind of pyramid, the base or pedestal of which is the fine spreading leaves of the plant. As this is esteemed in northern countries, one of the greatest curiofities of the vegetable tribe, we were happy at feeing it in fo great perfection; much greater, I think, than I had ever feen it before.

With us, I think, it is vulgarly reckoned, (though I believe falfely) that they only flower once in a hundred years. Here I was informed that, at the latest, they always blow the fixth year; but for the most part the fifth.—As the whole substance of the plant is carried into the stem and the flowers, the leaves begin to decay as soon as the blow is completed, and a numerous offspring of young plants are produced round the root of the old one; these are slipped off, and formed into new plantations, either for hedges or for avenues to their coun-

try houses, i but dead their to hope oil guilbu

27/2017

The city of Agrigentum, now called Girgenti, is irregular and ugly; though from a few miles distance at fea, it makes a noble appearance, little inferior to that of Genoa.—As it lies on the slope of the mountain, the houses do not hide one another; but every part of the city is seen.

On

lebrated port of Agricultury

deed; the houses are mean, the threets dirty, crooked and narrow. It still contains near twenty thoulead people; a sad reduction from its antient granedeur; when it was said to confist of no less than
eight hundred thousand, being the next city to Syloracuse for numbers and add to such amb and

and from our former acquaintance with him at Naples, gave us a kind, and an hospitable reception. He infifted on our being his guests; and we are now in his house comfortably lodged, and elegantly entertained, which, after our crowded little apartment in the sparonaro, is by no means a disagreeable change.—Farewell.—I shall write to you again soon.

TTERIO CANDIDO

Ever your's.

the remples are tannorted by thirteen large and Doric Columns on each fide; and fix at each and, All their bases, capitals, entablatures, &c fill remain entire; and as the architecture is perfectly fillips, withougangthing affected or studied, the whole strikes the eye at once, and pleases very much. The columns are, indeed, shorter than the respond of fillips, fillips, withough or sudded, so the certainly are not so clegant as some of the antient Temples.

CRILLO O PLR. P.

WE are just now returned from examining the antiquities of Agrigentum, the most considerable, perhaps, of anyoin Sicily of areas and canin of bour Their rules of the antient city die about a short mite from the modern one of These, sike the ruins of Syracuse, and borchards; but the remains of the temples here are much more conspicuous than those of Syracuse.

Syracuse.

Syracuse. Four of these have stood pretty much in a right line, near the south wall of the city. The first they call the temple of Venus; almost one half of which still remains. The second is that of Concord: It may be considered as entire, not one column having as yet fallen. It is precisely of the same dimensions and the same architecture as that of Venus, which had probably served as the model for it. By the following inscription, sound on a large piece of marble, it appears to have been built at the expence of the Litibitania probably after having been deseated by the people of Agrigentum.

RESPUBLICA LILIBITANORUM,

DEDICANTIBUS M. ATTERIO CANDIDO

PROCOS. ET L. CORNELIO MAR
CELLO. Q. P. R. P. R.

These temples are supported by thirteen large fluted Doric columns on each side; and six at each end. All their bases, capitals, entablatures, &c. still remain entire; and as the architecture is perfectly simple, without any thing affected or studied, the whole strikes the eye at once, and pleases very much. The columns are, indeed, shorter than the common Doric proportions; and they certainly are not so elegant as some of the antient Temples near Rome, and in other places in Italy. In the state of the antient Temples near

The third temple is that of Hercules, altogether in ruins; but appears to have been of a much greater fize than the former dwo. Mie measured to some of the broken columns, buear seven feet in diameter. Altowas here that the samous stance of Hercules stood, formuch celebrated by Gicero, which the people of Agrigentum descuded such such

fuch bravery, against Verres, who attempted to feize it. You will find the whole story in his plead-

ings against that infamous prætor.

There was likewise in this temple a samous picture of Zeuxis. Hercules was represented in his cradle killing the two serpents: Alemena and Amphytrion having just entered the apartment, were painted with every mark of terror and assonishment. Pliny says, the painter looked upon this piece as invaluable, and therefore could never be prevailed on to put a price upon it, but gave it as a present to Agrigentum, to be placed in the temple of Hercules. These two great master-pieces have been lost. We thought of them with regret, whilst we trod on these venerable ruins.

Near to this lie ruins of the temple of Jupiter Olympus, supposed by the Sicilian authors, to have been the largest in the heathen world. It is now called il tempio de' giganti, or the Giants Temple, as the people cannot conceive that such masses of rock could ever be put together by the hands of ordinary men. The fragments of Columns are indeed enormous, and gives us a vast idea of this fabric. It is said to have stood till the year 1100; but is now a perfect ruin. Our Cicerones assured us, it was exactly the same dimensions with the church of St. Peter at Rome: But in this they are egregiously mistaken—St. Peter's being much greater than any thing that ever the heathen world produced.

There are the remains of many more temples, and other great works; but these, I think, are the most conspicuous. They shew you that of Vulcan, of Proserpine, of Castor and Pollux, and a very remarkable one of Juno. This too was enriched by one of the most famous pictures of antiquity, which is celebrated by many of the antient writers.—Zeuxis was determined to excel every thing that had gone before him, and to form a model of human

perfection.

in

perfection. To this end, he prevailed on all the finest women of Agrigentum, who were even ambitious of the honour, to appear naked before him. Of these he chose five for his models, and moulding all the perfections of these beauties into one, he composed the picture of the goddess. This was ever looked upon as his mafter-piece, but was unfortunately burnt when the Carthaginians took Agrigentum.-Many of the citizens retired into this temple as to a place of fafety; but as foon as they found the gates attacked by the enemy, they agreed to fet fire to it, and chofe rather to perish in the flames, than submit to the power of the conquerors. However, neither the destruction of the temple, nor the loss of their lives, has been so much regretted by posterity, as the loss of this picture.

The temple of Asculapius (the ruins of which are still to be seen) was not less celebrated for a statue of Apollo. It was taken from them by the Carthaginians, at the same time that the temple of Juno was burnt. It was carried off by the conquerors, and continued the greatest ornament of Carthage for many years, and was at last restored by Scipio, at the final destruction of that city.—Some of the Sicilians alledge, I believe without any ground, that it was afterwards carried to Rome, and still remains there, the wonder of all ages; known to the whole world under the name of the Apollo of Belvidere, and allowed to be the perfection of human art.

I should be very tedious were I to give you a minute description of every piece of antiquity.—Indeed, little or nothing is to be learned from the greatest part of them. The antient walls of the city are mostly cut out of the rock; the catacombs and sepulchres are all very great: One of these is worthy of particular notice, because it is mentioned by Polybius, as being opposite to the temple of Hercules, and to have been struck by lightning even

in his time. It remains almost entire, and answers the description he gives of it: The inscriptions are so desaced, that we could make nothing of them.

This is the monument of Tero king of Agrigentum, one of the first of the Sicilian tyrants.—The great antiquity of it may be gathered from this, that Tero is not only mentioned by Diodorus, Polybius, and the latter of the antient historians; but likewise by Herodotus, and Pindar, who dedicates two of his Olympic odes to him: So that this monument must be more than two thousand years old. It is a kind of pyramid, probably one of the most durable forms.

All these mighty ruins of Agrigentum, and the whole mountain on which it stands, are composed of a concretion of sea-shells, run together, and cemented by a kind of sand or gravel, and now become as hard, and perhaps more durable than even marble itself. This stone is white before it has been exposed to the air; but in the temples and other ruins, it is become of a dark brown. I shall bring home some pieces of it for the inspection of the curious. I found these shells on the very summit of the mountain, at least sources or fifteen hundred seet above the level of the sea. They are of the commonest kinds, cockles, muscles, oysters, &c.

"But wonder how the devil they got there."

arrived. We have great

POPE.

By what means they have been lifted up to this vast height, and so intimately mixed with the substance of the rock, I leave to you and your philosophical friends to determine.—This old battered globe of ours, has probably suffered many convultions not recorded in any history.—You have discovered of the vast stratum of bones lately discovered in

[&]quot; The things we know are neither rich nor rare;

in Istria and Osero; -part of it runs below rocks of marble, upwards of forty feet in thickness, and they have not yet been able to afcertain its extent: Something of the fame kind has been found in Dalmatia, in the islands of the Archipelago; and lately, I am told, in the rock of Gibraltar. Now, the deluge recorded in Scripture, will hardly account for all the appearances of this fort to be met with. almost in every country in the world.—But I am interrupted by vifitors; which is a lucky circumstance, both for you and me; for I was just going to be very philosophical, and consequently very dull .- Adieu. durathe forms All their might rains of Arthrenium; and the

LETER & XIX.

Will to make world

whole mountain on which it itshes, she continued of a concretion of lex-fhells. Yes vigorby and its

cour as hard, and perhaps more decay within room marble tifeif. This hone is white before it is but in experied to the our por the de concler and online

from I found the e their on the very brace to

the mountain, at least fourth, is of tifes, "hardered Agrigentum, June 13th

groundmental kingle, con THE interruption in my last, was a deputation from the bishop, to invite us to a great dinner tomorrow at the port; fo that we shall know whether this place still deserves the character of luxury it always held amongst the antients: We have great reason to think, from the politeness and attention we have met with, that it has never lost its antient hospitality, for which it was likewise so much celebrated.

Plato, when he vifited Sicily, was so much struck with the luxury of Agrigentum, both in their houses. and their tables, that a faying of his is still recorded: That they built as if they were never to die, and

eat as if they had not an hour to live. It is preferved by Astian, and is just now before me.

the tells a flory by way of illustration, which shews a much greater conformity of manner than one could have expected, betwixt the young hobility amongst the antients, and our own at this day.

He fays, that after a great feast, where there was a number of young people of the first fashion, they got all fo much intoxicated, that from their reeling and tumbling upon one another, they imagined they were at lea in a storm, and began to think themfelves in the most imminent danger; at last they agreed that the only way to fave their lives was to lighten the ship, and with one accord began to throw the rich furniture out of the windows, to the great edification of the mob below; and did not flop till they had entirely cleared the house of it! which from this exploit, was ever after denominat? ed the triremes, or the ship. He says it was one of the principal palaces of this city, and retained this name for ever after. In Dublin, I have been told, there are more than one triremes; and that this frolic, which they call throwing the house out of the window, is by no means uncommon.

the antient authors for its drunkenness, it is as much celebrated for its hospitality: and I believe, it will be found, that this virtue, and this vice, have ever had a fortiof fucaking kindness for each other, and have generally gone hand in hand, both in antient and in modern times. The Swifs, the Scotch, and the Infilip who are at present the most drunken people in Europe, are likewise, in all probability, the most hospitable; whereas, in the very sober countries, Spain, Portugal, and Italy, hospitality is a virtue very little known, or indeed any other virtue, except sobriety; which has been produced; probably algood deal from the tyranny of their government.

byname none, of them that proclaim it in flronger

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ear as if they had he

ment, and their dread of the inquisition; for where every person is in sear, least his real sentiments should appear, it would be very dangerous to unlock his heart; but in countries where there are neither civil nor ecclesiassical tyrants to lay an embargo on our thoughts, people are under no apprehention less they should be known.

However, these are not the only reasons. The moral virtues and vices may sometimes depend on natural causes.—The very elevated situation of this city, where the air is exceedingly thin and cold, has perhaps been one reason why its inhabitants are fonder of wine than their neighbours in the valleys.

The same may be said of the three nations I have mentioned; the greatest part of their countries lying amongst hills and mountains, where the climate renders strong liquors more necessary; or, at least, less pernicious, than in low places.—It is not surprising, that this practice, probably begun amongst the mountains, where the air is so keen, has by degrees crept down into the valleys, and has at last become almost epidemical in those countries.

Fazzello, after railing at Agrigentum for its drunkenness, adds, that there was no town in the island so celebrated for its hospitality. He says that many of the nobles had servants placed at the gates of the city, to invite all strangers to their houses. It is in reference to this probably, that Empedocles says, that even the gates of the city proclaimed a welcome to every stranger. From our experience we are well intitled to say, that the people of Agrigentum still retain this antiquated virtue, so little known in polite countries. To-morrow we shall have a better opportunity of judging whether it is still accompanied by its fifter vice.

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FO

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The accounts that the old authors give of the maganificence of Agrigentum are amazing; tho indeed there are none of them that proclaim it in stronger

terms than the monuments that still remain. - Diodorus fays, the great veffels for holding water were commonly of filver, and the litters and carriages for the most part were of ivory richly adorned. He mentions a pond made at an immense expence, full of fish and of water-fowl, that in his time was the great refort of the inhabitants on their festivals; but he fays, that even then (in the age of Augustus) it was going to ruin, requiring too great an expence to keep it up. There is not now the smallest vestige of it: But there is still to be seen a curious spring of water that throws up a kind of oil on its furface, which is made use of by the poor people in many diseases. This is supposed to mark out the place of the celebrated pond, which is recorded by Pliny and Solinus to have abounded with oil.

Diodorus, speaking of the riches of Agrigentum, mentions one of its citizens turning victorious from the Olympic games, and entering his city, attended by three hundred chariots, each drawn by four white horses, richly caparisoned; and gives many other instances of their vast profusion and luxury.

Those horses, according to that author, were esteemed all over Greece, for their beauty and swiftness; and their race is celebrated by many of the antient writers.

" Arduus inde Agragas oftentat maxima longe

"Moenia magnanimum quondam generator equo-

fays Virgil, in the third Eneid; and Pliny acquaints us, that those which had been often victorious at the games were not only honoured with burial rites, but had magnificent monuments erected to eternize their memory. This Timeus confirms: He tells us, that he saw at Agrigentum several pyramids built as sepulchral monuments to celebrated horses; he adds,

adds, that when those animals became old and unfit for service, they were always taken care of, and fpent the remainder of their lives in ease and plenty.—I could wish that our countrymen would imitate the gratitude and humanity of the Sicilians in this article; at least the latter part of it. I don't know that our nation can fo justly be taxed with cruelty or ingratitude in any other article as in their treatment of horses; the animal, that of all others, is the most entitled to our care. How piteous a thing it is, on many of our great roads, to fee the finest old hunters, that were once the glory of the chace, condemned, in the decline of life, to the tyranny of the most cruel oppressors; in whose hands they fuffer the most extreme misery, till they at last fink under the task that is assigned them. I am called away to fee fome more antiques, but shall finish this letter to night, as the post goes off for Italy to-morrow morning.

old walls and vaults that little or nothing can be made of. They give them names, and pretend to tell you what they were, but as they bear no refemblance to those things now, it would be no less idle to trouble you with their nonsense than to believe it. We have indeed seen one thing that has amply repaid us for the trouble we have taken. It is the representation of a boar-hunting in alto relievo, on white marble; and is at least equal, if not superior, to any thing of the kind I have met with in Italy. It consists of sour different parts, which form the history of this remarkable chace and its

confequences:

The first is the preparation for the hunt. There are twelve hunters, with each his lance, and a short hanger under his lest arm of a very singular form. The dogs resemble those we call lurchers. The horses are done with great fire and spirit, and are perhaps

perhaps a better proof of the excellence of the race, than even the testimony of their authors; for the artist that formed these must certainly have been ac-

customed to see very fine horses.

The fecond piece represents the chace.—The third the death of the king, by a fall from his horse.—And the fourth, the despair of the queen and her attendants on receiving the news. She is represented as falling down in a swoon, and supported by her women, who are all in tears.

It is executed in the most masterly stile, and is indeed one of the finest remains of antiquity. It is preserved in the great church, which is noted thro' all Sicily for a remarkable echo; something in the manner of our whispering gallery at St. Paul's,

though more difficult to be accounted for.

If one person stands at the west gate, and another places himself on the cornice, at the most distant point of the church, exactly behind the great altar, they can hold a conversation in very low whispers.

For many years this fingularity was little known; and feveral of the confelling chairs being placed near the great altar, the wags, who were in the fecret, used to take their station at the door of the cathedral; and by this means heard distinctly every word that passed betwixt the confessor and his penitent; of which, you may believe, they did not fail to make their own use when occasion offered. The most secret intrigues were discovered; and evety woman in Agrigentum changed either her gallant or her confessor. Yet still it was the same.—At last, however, the cause was found out; the chairs; were removed, and other precautions were taken to prevent the discovery of these facred mysteries; and a mutual amnesty passed amongst all the offended parties.

Agrigentum, like Syracuse, was long subject to the yoke of tyrants. Fazzello gives some account of their cruelty, but I have no intention of repeating it: One story, however, pleased me; it is a well known one, but as it is short, you shall have it.

Perillo, a goldsmith, by way of paying court to Philaris the tyraut, made him a present of a brazen bull, of admirable workmanship; hollow within, and so contrived that the voice of a person shut up in it, sounded exactly like the bellowing of a real bull. The artist pointed out to the tyrant what an admirable effect this must produce, were he only to shut up a sew criminals in it, and make a fire un-

der them.

Phalaris, struck with so horrid an idea, and perhaps curious to try the experiment, told the gold-smith that he himself was the only person worthy of animating his bull: that he must have studied the note that made it roar to the greatest advantage, and that it would be unjust to deprive him of any part of the honour of his invention. Upon which he ordered the goldsmith to be shut up, and made a great fire around the bull; which immediately began to roar, to the admiration and delight of all Agrigentum. Cicero says this bull was carried to Carthage at the taking of Agrigentum; and was restored again by Scipio, after the destruction of that city.

Fazzello adds another story, which is still more to the honour of Phalaris. Two friends, Melanippus, and Cariton, had conspired his death.—Cariton in hopes of saving his striend from the danger of the enterprize, determined to execute it alone. However in his attempt to poignard the tyrant, he was seized by the guards, and immediately put to the torture, to make him consess his accomplice; this he bore with the utmost fortitude, resuling to make the discovery; till Melanippus, informed of the situation of his friend, ran to the tyrant, assuring him that he alone was the guilty person: that it

was entirely by his infligation that Cariton had acted; and begged that he might be put on the rack in the place of his friend. Phalaris, struck with such

heroism, pardoned them both.

Notwithstanding this generous action, he was in many respects a barbarous tyrant. Fazzello gives the following account of his death, with which I shall conclude this letter, for I am monstrously tired, and I dare say, so are you. Zeno the philosopher, came to Agrigentum, and being admitted into the presence of the tyrant, advised him, for his own comfort, as well as that of his subjects, to resign his power, and to lead a private life. Philaris did not relish these philosophical sentiments; and suspecting Zeno to be in a conspiracy with some of his subjects, ordered him to be put to the torture in presence of the citizens of Agrigentum.

Zeno immediately began to reproach them with cowardice and publishminity in submitting tamely to the yoke of so worthless a tyrant; and in a short time raised such a slame that they defeated the guards, and stoned Philaris to death.—I dare say you are glad they did it so quickly.—Well, I shall not write such long letters for the suture; for I assure you it is at least as troublesome to the writer as the reader. Adieu. We shall sail to-morrow or next morning for Trapani, from whence you may expect to hear from me. We are now going out to examine more antique walls, but I shall not trouble

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LETTER XX.

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June 16th. WHEN I have nothing else to do, I generally take up the pen. We are now on the top of a high mountain, about half way betwixt Agrigentum and Palermo. Our fea expedition by Trapani has failed, and we are determined to put no more confidence in that element, happy beyond measure to find ourselves at a distance from it, though in the most wretched of villages. We have travelled all night on mules; and arrived here about ten o'clock, overcome with fleep and fatigue. We have just had an excellent dish of tea, which never fails to cure me of both; and I am now as fresh as when we set out. It has not had the same effect on my companions: they have thrown themselves down on a vile strawbed in the corner of the hovel; and in spite of a parcel of starved chickens, that are fluttering about and picking the firaws all around them, they are already fast asleep.

I shall seize that time to recapitulate what has

happened fince my laft.

The day after I wrote to you, we made fome little excursions round Agrigentum. The country is delightful, producing corn, wine and oil, in the greatest abundance: the fields are, at the same time, covered with a variety of the finest fruits; oranges, lemons, pomegranates, almonds, Pistachio nuts, &c. These afforded us almost as agrecable an entertainment as the confideration of the ruins from whence they fpring.

We dined with the bishop, according to agreement, and rose from table, convinced that the antient Agrigentini could not possibly understand the true luxury of eating better than their descendants, to whom they have transmitted a very competent portion both of their social virtues and vices. I beg their pardon for calling them vices, I wish I had a softer name for it; it looks like ingratitude for their hospitality, for which we owe them so much.

We were just thirty at table, but, upon my word, I do not think we had less than an hundred dishes of meat. These were dressed with the richest and most delicate sauces; and convinced us that the old Roman proverb of "Siculus coquus et Sicula men-" fa," was not more applicable in their time, than it is at present. Nothing was wanting that could be invented to fimulate and to flatter the palate; and to create a falle appetite as well as to fatisfy it. Some of the very diffies to much relifhed by the Roman epicures made a part of the fealt; particularly the morene, which is often mentioned by their authors: it is a species of eel, found only in this part of the Mediterranean, and fent from hence to feveral of the courts of Europe. It is not fo fat and luscious as other eels, so that you can eat a great deal more of it its flesh is as white as snow, and is indeed a very great delicacy. But a modern refinement in luxury has, I think, still produced a greater: By a particular kind of management they make the livers of their fowls grow to a large fize, and at the fame time to acquire a high and rich flavour. It is indeed a most incomparable dish; but the means of procuring it is fo cruel, that I will not even truff it with you. Perhaps, without any bad intention, you might mention it to fome of your friends, they to others, till at last it might come into the hands of those that would be glad to try the experiment; and the whole race of poultry might ever have reason to curse me: let it suffice to say that

that it occasions a painful and lingering death to the poor animal: that I know is enough to make you wish never to taste of it, whatever effect it may

have upon others.

The Sicilians eat of every thing, and attempted to make us do the fame. The company was remarkably merry, and did by no means belie their antient character, for most of them were more than half feas over; long before we role from table; and I was fomewhat apprehensive of a second edition of the Triremes scene, as they were beginning to reel exceedingly. By the bye, I do not doubt but the phrase of Half seas over, may have taken its origin from some such story. They begged us to make a bowl of punch, a liquor they had often heard of, but had never feen. The materials were immediately found, and we succeeded so well, that they preferred it to all the wines on the table, of which they had a great variety. We were obliged to replenish the bowl fo often, that I really expected to fee most of them under the table. They called it Pontio, and spoke loudly in its praise; declaring that Pontio (alluding to Pontius Pilate) was a much better fellow than they had ever taken him for. However, after dinner, one of them, a reverend canon, grew excessively sick, and while he was throwing up, he turned to me with a rueful countenance, and shaking his head he groaned out, "Ah, Signor Capitano, sapeve sempre che Pontio era un grande traditore."——"I always knew that Pontius was a great traitor." Another of them overhearing him, exclaimed—"Afpettatevi Signor Canonico."—"Not fo fast (faid he) my good Canon."-" Niente al pregiudizio di Signor Pontio, vi prego.-Recordate, che Pontio v'ha fatto un canonico:-et Pontio ha fatto fua eccellenza uno Vescovo-Non Scordatevi mai di vostri amici," stori i sat bas : morte por s

word to curie mer let it futhee to lay nd.

Now what do you think of these reverend fathers of the church? their merit, you will eafily perceive, does not confift in fasting and prayer .- Their creed, they fay, they have a good deal modernized, and is much timpler than that of Athanafius. One of them told me, that if we would but flay with them for some little time, we should soon be convinced that they were the happiest fellows on earth. "We have exploded (faid he) from our fystem every thing that is difmal or melancholy: and are perfuaded, that of all the roads in the universe, the road to heaven must be the pleasantest and least gloomy: If it be not fo, (added he) God have mercy upon us, for I am afraid we shall never get there." I told him I could not flatter him, "That if laughing was really a fin, as some people taught, they were certainly the greatest of all finners." "Well, (faid he) we shall at least endeavour to be happy here; and that I am perfuaded, is the best of all preparations for happinels hereafter. Abstinence (continaed he) from all innocent and lawful pleasures, we reckon one of the greatest sins, and guard against it with the utmost care: and I am pretty fure it is a fin that none of us here will ever be damned for." He concluded by repeating two lines which he told me was their favourite maxim; the meaning of which was exactly those of Mr. Pope.

For God is paid when man receives,

" To enjoy is to obey."

phienologa

This is not the first time I have met with this libertine spirit amongst the Roman Catholic clergy.-There is so much nonsense and mummery in their worship, that they are afraid left firangers should believe they are ferious; and perhaps too often fly to the opposite extreme. . sonist we dioudaphink We reincreating to violently, that we were alread of

We were, however, much pleased with the bishop; he is greatly and deservedly respected, yet his presence did no way diminish, but rather increased the jollity of the company. He entered into every joke, joined in the repartee, at which he is a great proficient, and entirely laid afide his episcopal dignity; which, however, I am told, he knows very well how to assume when it is necessary. He placed us next himfelf, and behaved indeed, in every refpect, with the greatest ease and politeness. He is one of the first families of the island, and brother to the Prince of -... I had his whole pedigree pat, but now I have loft it; no matter: he is an honest, pleasant, little sellow, and that is of much more consequence. He is not yet forty; and fo high a promotion in fo early a period of life, is reckoned very extraordinary, this being the richest bishoprick in the kingdom. He is a good scholar, and very deeply read both in antient and modern learning; and his genius is in no degree inferior to his erudition. The fimilarity of character and circumstances struck me so strongly, that I could scarce help thinking I had got befide our worthy and respectable friend, the b-p of D-y, which, I affure you, still added greatly to the pleasure I had in his company. I told the bishop of this; adding, that he was brother to 1-d B-1: he feemed much pleased, and said, he had often heard of the family, both when lord B-l was ambaffador in Spain, and his other brother commanded in the Mediterraneau.

We found in this company a number of Free Masons, who were delighted beyond measure when they discovered that we were their brethren. They pressed us to spend a sew more days amongst them, and offered us letters to Palermo, and every other town we should think of visiting; but the heats are increasing so violently, that we were assaid of prolonging

prolonging our expedition, lest we should be caught by the Sirocco winds supposed to blow from the burning deserts of Africa, and sometimes attended with dangerous consequences to those that travel

over Sicily.

But I find I have omitted several circumstances of our dinner. I should have told you that it was an annual seast given by the nobility of Agrigentum to the bishop. It was served in an immense granary, half full of wheat, on the sea shore, chosen on purpose to avoid the heat. The whole was on plate; and what appeared singular to us, but I believe is a much better method than ours, great part of the fruits was served up with the second course, the first dish of which that went round was strawberries. The Sicilians were a good deal surprised to see us eat them with cream and sugar, yet upon trial they

did not at all dislike the composition.

The defert confifted of a great variety of fruits, and still a greater of ices: these were so disguised in the shapes of peaches, figs, oranges, nuts, &c. that a person unaccustomed to ices might very easily have been taken in, as an honest sea officer was lately at the house of a certain minister of your acquaintance, not less distinguished for the elegance of his table, than the exact formality and fubordination to be observed at it. After the fecond course was removed; and the ices, in the shape of various fruits and fweetmeats, advanced by way of rearguard; one of the servants carried the figure of a fine large peach to the captain, who unacquainted with deceit of any kind, never doubted that it was a real one; and cutting it through the middle, in a moment had one large half of it in his mouth; at first he only looked grave, and blew up his cheeks to give it more room; but the violence of the cold foon getting the better of his patience, he began to tumble it about from fide to fide in his mouth, his

eyes rushing out of water, till at last, able to hold no longer, he spit it out upon his plate, exclaim-ing with an horrid oath, "A painted snowball, by God!" and wiping away his tears with his napkin, he turned in a rage to the Italian servant that had helped him, with a "D-n your macaroni eyes, you fon of a b-, what did you mean by that? The fellow who did not understand a word of it, could not forbear fmiling, which fill convinced the captain the more that it was a trick; and he was just going to throw the rest of the snowball in his face, but was prevented by one of the company; when recovering from his passion, and thinking the object unworthy of it, he only added in a lofter tone, "Very well, neighbour, I only wish I had you on board ship for half an hour, you should have a dozen before you could fay Jack Robinson, for all your painted cheeks."

I ask pardon for this digression, but as it is a good Taughable flory, I know you will excuse it. About fix o'clock we took a cordial leave of our jolly friends at Agrigentum; and embarked on board our sparonaro at the new port. I should have told you, that this harbour has lately been made at a very great expence; this city having always been one of the principal ports of the island, for the exportation of grain. The bishop and his company went into a large barge, and failed round the harbour, we faluted them as we went out; they returned the compliment, and we took a second leave. The evening was fine, and we coaffed along for a good many miles; we paffed feveral points and little promontories, that were exceedingly beautiful and picturesque, many of them were covered with noble large aloes in full blow. In one place, I counted upwards of 200 of those fine majeric plants all in flower; a fight which I imagined was hardly to be met with in the world After

After fun-fet,-Alas, fain would I conceal what happened after fun-fet !- but life you know is chequered with good and evil, and it would have been great prefumption to receive fo much of the one, without expecting a little dash of the other two. Befides a fea expedition is nothing without a fform. Our journal would never have been readable, had it not been for this-Well, I affure you, we had it. It was not indeed fo violent as the great one of Louisburgh, or perhaps even that described by Virgil; the reading of which is faid to have made people fea-fick; but it was rather too much for our little bark.-I was going to tell you that after funfet the fky began to overcast, and in a short time the whole atmosphere appeared fiery and threatning. We attempted to get into some creek, but could find none. The wind grew loud, and we found it was in vain to proceed; but as the night was dark and hazy, we were dubious about the possibility of reaching the port of Agrigentum. . However, this was all we had for it, as there were none other within many miles. Accordingly we tacked about, and plying both oars and fail, with great care not to come amongst the rocks and breakers, in about two hours we spied the light-house; by which we directed our course, and got fafely into port, be-twist one and two in the morning: we lay down on our mattrals, and flept found till ten, when finding the fallity of our hypothesis, that there could be no bad weather in the Mediterranean at this feafon, we unanimoully agreed to have nothing more to do with sparonaros, and fent immediately to engage foules to carry us over the mountains to Palermo. The form continued with violence the whole day, and made us often thank heaven that we had got faiely back. It was not till five in the afternoou, that we had mules, guides, and guards provided us when we let off, pretty much in the same order, and in

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in the same equipage, as we had done about three weeks ago from Metfina. Our guards attempted to fill us with the most dreadful apprehensions of this road, shewing us every mile, where such a one was robbed, fuch another was murdered; and entertained us with fuch melancholy ditties the greatest part of the way. Indeed, if one half of their ftories be true, it is certainly the most dangerous road in the world; but I looked on most of them as fictions, invented only to increase their own consequence, and to procure a little more money. There is, indeed, some foundation for these stories; as there are numbers of gibbets erected on the road in terrorem: and every little baron has the power of life and death in his own domain. Our bishop's brether, whose name I have forgot, seized lately four and twenty of these desperate banditti, after a stout refistance, where several were killed on both fides; and not with standing that some of them were under the protection of the nobility, and in their service, they were all hanged. However, this has by no means rooted them out. Our guards in the suspicious places went with their pieces cock'd, and kept a close look out to either fide of them; but we faw nothing to alarm us, except the most dreadful roads in the world; in many places worse than any thing I ever met with amongst the Alps.

After travelling about twenty miles, we arrived by two in the morning at the most wretched—I don't know what to call it—there was not any one thing to be had but a little straw for the mules. However after a good deal of difficulty, we at last got fire enough to boil our tea-kettle, and having brought bread from Agrigentum, we made an excellent meal. Our tea-table was a round stone in the field, and as the moon shone bright, we had no occasion for any other luminary. You may believe our stay here was as short as possible; the house was

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too dreadfully nasty to enter it, and the stable was full of poor wretches sleeping on the bare ground. In short, I never saw in any country so miserable an inn, for so it is stiled. We mounted our cavalry with all expedition, and in a very fhort time got into the woods, where we were ferenaded by the nightingale as we went along, who made us a full apology and atonement for the bad cheer we had met with. In a short time it was day, and then we had entertainment enough from the varied scenes of the most beautiful, wild, and romantic country in the world.—The fertility of many of the plains is truly aftonishing, without inclosures, without manure, and almost without culture. It is with reason, that this island was stiled, "Romani imperii horreum," the granary of the Roman empire. Were it cultivated, it would still be the great granary of Europe. Pliny fays it yielded a hundred after one; and Diodorus, who was a native of the island, and wrote on the fpot, assures us that it produced wheat and other grain fpontaneously; and Homer advances the same fact in the Odyssey.

The soil untill d a ready harvest yields,
With wheat and barley wave the golden sields;
Spontaneous wines from weighty clusters pour,
And Jove descends in each prolific show'r.
POPE.

Many of the mountains feem to be formed by subterraneous fire; several of them retain their conical figure and their craters, but not so exact as those on Mount Ætna, as they are probably much older. I likewise observed many pieces of lava on the road, and in the beds of the torrents; and a good deal of the stone called tusa, which is certainly the production of a volcano; so that I have no doubt, that a great part of this island, as well as the

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the neighbouring ones of Lipari, &c. has been originally formed by subterraneous fire: we likewise passed some quarries of a kind of tale; and also of a coarse alabaster; of this they make a sort of stucco or platiter, refembling that of Paris; but what I much regretted, we milled feeing the famous falt of Agrigentum; found in the earth, about four or five miles from that city. It has this remarkable property different from all other falt, that in the fire It presently melts; but in the water it cracks and folits but never diffolves. It is celebrated by Pliny, Ariffotle, and others of the autient, as well as modern naturalists. Fazello, whom I have brought along with me to read by the road, fays, he has of ten experienced this; he adds from the authority of these antient authors, that they formerly had mines of this falt, so pure and folid, that the flatuaries and sculptors preferred it to marble, and made various works of it.

The poor people of the village have found us out, and with looks full of mifery have furrounded our door.—Accursed tyranny; -what despicable objects we become in thy hands!—Is it not inconceivable, how any government should be able to render poor and wretched, a country which produces, almost spontaneously, every thing that even luxury can defire? But alas! poverty and wretchedness have ever attended the Spanish yoke, both on this, and on t'other fide of the globe.—They make it their boast, that the sun never sets on their dominions, but forget that fince they became fuch, they have left him nothing to fee in his course but deserted fields, barren wildernesses, oppressed peasants, and lazy, lying, lecherous monks. Such are the fruits of their boasted conquests. They ought rather to be assimiled that ever the fun should see them at all.—The fight of these poor people has filled me with indignation. This village is furrounded

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by the finest country in the world, yet there was neither bread nor wine to be found in it, and the poor inhabitants appear more than half starved.

" Mongst Ceres' richest gifts with want oppressed, "And midst the flowing vineyard, die of thirst."

I shall now think of concluding, as I do not recollect that I have much more to say to you. Bessides, I find myself exceeding sleepy. I sincerely wish it may not be the same case with you, before you have read thus far. We have ordered our mules to be ready by five o'clock, and shall again travel all night—the heats are too great to allow of it by day; adieu.—These two sellows are still sound asseep. In a few minutes I shall be so too, for the pen is almost dropping out of my hand. Farewell.

cover amoven the woods, and chicaconstitute for the country at I related at the country mercaled at

proportion, as we advanced, The monteaut al-

then we began, our match, attended by the higher

Our whole squadpon was drawn sur, and we

Palermo, June 19th.

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WE are now arrived at the great capital of Sicily, which in our opinion in beauty and elegance is greatly superior to Naples. It is not, indeed, so large, but the regularity, the uniformity and neatness of its streets and buildings, render it more pleasing; it is full of people, who have mostly an air of assume and gaiety. And indeed we seem to have got into a new world.—But stop—not so fast—I had forgot that you have still 50 miles to travel

travel on a cursed stubborn mule, over rocks and precipices; for I can see no reason, why we should bring you at once into all the sweets of Palermo, without bearing at least some little part in the fatigues of the journey. Come we shall make them

as short as possible.

We left you, I think, in a little village on the top of a high mountain. We should indeed use you very ill, were we to leave you there any longer; for I own it is the very worst country quarter, that ever fell to my lot. However, we got a good comfortable sleep in it, the only one thing it assorded us; and the sleas, the bugs, and chickens, did all that lay in their power even to deprive us of that, but we defied them. Our two leaders came to awake us before sive, apostrophying their entry with a detail of the horrid robberies and murders that had been committed in the neighbourhood; all of them, you may be sure, on the very road that

we were to go.

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Our whole squadron was drawn out, and we were ranged in order of battle, by five o'clock, when we began our march, attended by the whole village, man, woman, and child We foon got down amongst the woods, and endeavoured to forget the objects of misery we had left behind us, The beauty and richness of the country increased in proportion as we advanced. The mountains, although of a great height (that we have left is near 4000 feet, the mercury standing at 26 inches 2 lines) are covered to the very fummit with the richest palture. The grafs in the vallies is already burned up, so that the flocks are all upon the mountains. The gradual separation of heat and cold, is very visible in taking a view of them. The vallies are brown and fcorched, and fo are the mountains to a considerable height; they then begin to take a shade of green, which grows deeper and deeper, and covers the whole upper region; however, on the lummit, ad forgot that you have full

fummit, the grafs and corn are by no means fo luxuriant as about the middle. We were amazed at the richness of the crops, far superior to any thing I had ever feen either in England or Flanders, where the happy foil is affifted by all the arts of cultivation; whilft here, the wretched hufbandman can hardly afford to give it a furrow; and gathers in, with a heavy heart, the most luxuriant harvest. To what purpose is it given him? Only to lie a dead weight upon his hand, fometimes till it is entirely loft; exportation being prohibited to all fuch as cannot pay exorbitantly for it to the fovereign. What a contrast is there betwixt this, and the little uncouth country of Switzerland!----to be fure, the dreadful confequences of oppression can never be fet in a more striking opposition to the bleshings and the charms of liberty. Switzerland, the very excrescence of Europe, where nature seems to have thrown out all her cold and stagnating humours; full of lakes, marshes and woods, and surrounded by immense rocks, and everlasting mountains of ice, the barren, but facred, ramparts of liberty, Switzerland, enjoying every bleffing, where every bleffing feems to have been denied; whilft Sicily, covered by the most luxuriant hand of Nature; where Heaven seems to have showered down its richest blessings with the utmost prodigality; groans under the most abject poverty, and with a pale and wan visage, starves in the midst of plenty. It is LIBERTY alone that works this standing miracle.— Under her plastic hands the mountains fink, the lakes are drained; and these rocks, these marshes, thele woods, become so many sources of wealth and of pleasure. But what has temperance to do with wealth?

--- " Here reigns Content,

45 And Nature's child, Simplicity; long fince

" Exil'd from polist'd realms."

"Tis Industry Supplies

" The little Temperance wants; and rofy Health

" Sits smiling at the board."

You will begin to think I am in danger of turning poetical in these classic fields;—I am sure I neither suspected any of the mountains we have passed to be Parnassus; nor did I believe any one of the nine soolish enough to inhabit them, except Melpomene perhaps, as she is so fond of tragical faces: however, I shall now get you out more into the gay world. I assure you, I have often wished that you could have lent me your muse, on this expedition; my letters would then have been more worth the reading; but you must take the will for the deed.

After travelling till about midnight, we arrived at another miserable village, where we slept for fome hours on straw, and continued our journey again by day-break. We had the pleasure of seeing the rifing-fun from the top of a pretty high mountain, and were delighted with the prospect of Strombolo, and the other Lipari Islands, at a great diftance from us. On our descent from this mountain, we found ourselves on the banks of the sea, and took that road, preferable to an inland one, although feveral miles nearer. We foon lighted from our mules, and plunged into the water, which has ever made one of our greatest pleasures in this expedition: nobody that has not tried it, can conceive the delight of this, after the fatigue of fuch a journey, and passing three days without undressing. Your friend Fullarton, though only feventeen, but whose mind and body now equally despise every fatique, found himself strong as a lion, and fit to begin such another march. We boiled our tea-kettle under a fig-tree, and eat a breakfast that might have

ferved a company of strolling players.

The approach to Palermo is fine. The alleys are planted with fruit trees, and large American aloes in full blow.—Near the city we passed a place of execution, where the quarters of a number of robbers were hung up upon hooks, like so many hains; some of them appeared newly executed and made a very unsightly figure. On our arrival, we learned that a priest and three others had been taken a few days ago, after an obstinate desence, in which several were killed on both sides; the priest, rather than submit to his conquerors, plunged his hanger into his breast, and died on the spot; the rest submitted and were executed.

As there is but one inn in Palermo, we were obliged to agree to their own terms (five ducats aday). We are but indifferently lodged; however, it is the only inn we have feen in Sicily, and indeed, may be faid to be the only one in the island. It is kept by a noify troublesome Frenchwoman, who I find will plague us; there is no keeping her out of our rooms, and the never comes in without telling us of fuch a prince and fuch a duke, that were fo superlatively happy at being lodged in her house: we can eafily learn that they were all desperately in love with her; and indeed the feems to take it very much amifs, that we are not inclined to be of the fame fentiments. I have already been obliged to tell her, that we are very retired fort of people, and do not like company; I find the does not efteem us the better for it; and this morning, (as I passed through the kitchen, without speaking to her) I overheard her exclaim, "Ah, mon Dieu! comme " ces Anglois fout fauvages." I believe we must take more notice of her, otherwise we shall certainly have our rent raised; but she is as fat as a pig, and

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and as ugly as the devil, and lays on a quantity of paint on each of her swelled cheeks, that looks like a great plaister of red Morocco, Her picture is hanging in the room where I am now writing, as well as that of her husband, who, by the bye, is a ninny; they are no less vile curiofities than the originals.—He is drawn with his fnuff-box open in one hand, and a dish of coffee in the other; and at the fame time, faith l'amiable a Madame. I took notice of this triple occupation, which feemed to imply fomething particular. She told me that the thought was her's; that her husband was exceeding fond of fuuff and of coffee, and wanted by this to thew that he was still more occupied with her than with either of them. I could not help applauding the ingenuity of the conceit, Madame is painted with an immense bouquet in her breast, and an orange in her right hand, emblematic of her sweetness and purity; and has the prettiest little smirk on her face you can imagine. She told me that she insisted on the painter drawing her avec le souris sur le visage, but as he had not esprit enough to make her smile naturally, she was obliged to force one, "qui n'e-" toit pas tout a fait si jolie que le naturel, mais " qui vaudroit toujours mieux que de parroitre " fombre."—I agreed with her perfectly; and affured her it became her very much, " parceque les " dames graffes sont toujours de bonne humeur."-I found, however, that she would willingly have excused me the latter part of the compliment, which more than lost all that I had gained by the former. " Il est vrat" (faid she, a good deal piqued) "j'ai " un peu de l'em bon point, mais pas tant grasse " pourtant," I pretended to excuse myself, from not understanding all the finesse of the language; and affured her that de l'em ban point was the very phrase I mean to make use of. She accepted the apology, and we are again reconciled; for, to give the

the devil his due, they are good-humoured. She made me a curtley, and repeated, "Oui, Mon-" fieur, poul parlet comme il faut, il faut dire de "! Pem bon point.—On ne dit pas graffe." I affured her, bowing to the ground, that the word should ever be razed from my vocabulary. She left me with a gracious fmile, and a curtfey much lower than the first; adding, " Je scavois bien que Mon-" sieur etoit un homme comme il faut;" at the same tripping off on her tip toes, as light as a feather, to shew me how much I had been miltaken. This woman made me recollect (what I have always observed) how little the manners of the French are to be changed by their connection with other nations; allowing none to be in any degree worthy of imitation but their own. Although fhe has now been here these twenty years, she is still as perfectly French, as if she had never been without the gates of Paris; and looks upon every woman in Palermo with the utmost contempt, because they have never feen that capital, nor heard the fublime mufick of its opera. She is likewife (allowing for the difference of rank) an admirable epitome of all French women, whose universal passion has ever been the defire of admiration, and of appearing young; and ever would be, I believe, were they to live to the age of a thousand. Any person that will take a look of the withered death's heads in their public places, covered over with a thick mask of paint, will be convinced of this. -- Now, our old ladies, when they get to the wrong fide of fixty, generally take a jump up to the borders of four-fcore, and appear no less vain of their years, than ever they were of their youth, I know some af them, that I am fure are not less happy, nor less contented, (I; might almost add) less admired with their wrinkles, than ever they were with their dimples. I do not know whether a chearful old woman, who is willing to appear so, is more respectable, or more estimable; or a withered witch, who fills up every wrinkle with varnish, and at sourscore attempts to give herself the bloom of sour-and-twenty, is ridiculous and contemptible:—but as dinner is on the table, I shall leave it to you to determine. Adicu-

LETTER XXII

Palermo, June 23d.

I SHALL have a great deal to write you about this city; we are every day more delighted with it, and shall leave it with much regret. We have now delivered our letters, in confequence of which we are loaded with civilities, and have got into a very agreeable fet of acquaintance. But I shall first attempt to give you some little idea of the town, and then speak of its inhabitants. It is by much the most regular I have feen, and is built upon that plan, which I think all large cities ought to follow. The two great streets intersect each other in the centre of the city, where they form a handsome square, called the Ottangolo, adorned with elegant uniform buildings. From the centre of this square, you see the whole of these noble streets, and the four great gates of the city that terminate them; the fymmetry and beauty of which produce a fine effect. The whole of these are to be magnificently illuminated fontetimenext month, and must certainly be the finest

fight in the world. The four gates are each at the distance of about half a mile, (the diameter of the city being no more than a mile:) these are elegant pieces of architecture richly adorned; particularly the Porta Nova and Porta Felice, terminating the great street called the Corfo, runs fouth-west and north-east. The lesser streets in general run paral-lel to these great ones; so that from every part of the city, in a few minutes walking, you are fure to arrive at one of the capital streets. The Porta Felice (by much the handfomest of the gates) opens to the Marino, a delightful walk, which conflitutes one of the great pleafures of the nobility of Palermo. It is bounded on one fide by the walls of the city, and on the other by the sea, from whence, even at this scorching season, there is always an agreeable breeze. In the centre of the Marino they have lately erected an elegant kind of temple, which, during the fummer months, is made use of as an orchestra for music; and as in this season they are obliged to convert the night into day, the concert does not begin till the clock strikes midnight, which is the figual for the fyniphony to firike up: at that time the walk is crowded with carriages and people on foot; and the better to favour pleasure and intrigue, there is an order, that no person, of whatever quality, shall prefume to carry a light with The flambeaux are extinguished at the Porta Felice, where the fervants wait for the return of the carriages; and the company generally continue an hour or two together in utter darkness; except when the intruding moon, with her horns and her chastity comes to disturb them. The concert finishes about two in the morning, when, for the most part, every husband goes home to his own wife. This is an admirable inflitution, and never produces any feandal: no hufband is fuch a brute as to deny his wife the Marino, and the fadies are fo cautious and cirteamed

cumfpect on their fide, that the more to avoid giv-

ing offence, they very often put on masques.

Their other amusements consist chiefly in their Converzationes, of which they have a variety every night. There is one general one, supported by the fubscription of the nobility, which is open every evening at fun-fet, and continues till midnight, when the Marino begins. It better deferves the name of a conversation than any I have seen in Italy; for here the people really come to converse; whereas in Italy they only go to play at cards and eat ices. I have observed, that seldom or never one half of the company is engaged in play, nor do they either play long or deep. There are a number of apartments belonging to this conversation, illuminated with wax lights, and kept exceedingly cool and agreeable; and indeed it is altogether one of the most fensible and comfortable institutions I have feen: befides this, there are generally a number of particular conversations every night, and what will a good deal furprise you, these are always held in the apartments of the lying-in ladies: for in this happy climate, child bearing is divested of all its terrors, and is only confidered as a party of pleasure. This circumstance we were ignorant of till t'other morning. The duke of Verdura, who does us the honour of the place, with great attention and politeness, came to tell us, we had a visit to make that was indispensable. "The Princess" Paterno (said he) was brought to bed last night; " and it is absolutely incumbent on you to pay "your respects to her this evening." At first I thought he was in joke, but he affured me he was ferious, and that it would be looked upon as a great unpoliteness to neglect it.-Accordingly we went about fun-fet, and found the princess fitting up in her bed, in an elegant undress, with a number of her friends around her. She talked as usual, and feemed

feemed perfectly well. This convertation is repeated every night during her convalenceme, which generally lasts for about eleven or twelve days. This custom is universal, and as the ladies here are very prolific, there are for the most part three of four of these assemblies going on in the city at the same time; possibly the Marino may not a little

contribute towards them:

The Sicilian ladies marry at thirteen of fourteen, and are fometimes grandmothers before they are thirty.-The Count Stetela presented us a few days ago to his coufin, the Princels Partana, who he told us had a great number of children, the eldeft of which was a very fine girl of fifteen. We talked to the princess for half an hour, not in the least doubting all the time that the was the daughter, fill at last the young lady came in; and even then, it was not easy to say which appeared the handsom-est or the youngest. This lady has had twelve children, and is ftill in her bloom; fhe affured me that fhe never enjoyed more perfect health than when the was in child-bed; -that during the time of her pregnancy the was often indisposed, but that immediately on delivery the was cured of all her complaints, and was eapable of enjoying the company of her friends even more than at any other time. I expressed my surprise at this very singular happines of their climate or constitutions; but fire appeared still more surprifed when I told her, that we lost many of our finest women in child-bed, and that even the most fortunate and easy deliveries were attended with violent pain and anguish. -She lamented the fate of our fadies, and thanked heaven that the was born a Sicilian.

What this singularity is owing to, let the learned determine; but it is surely one of the capital blessings of these climates, where the curse that was

laid

laid upon mother Eve feems to be entirely taken off: I don't know how the ladies here have deferved this exemption, as they have at least as much both of Eve and the ferpent as ours have, and fill retain their appetite, as firong as ever, for forbidden fruit.- It feems hard, that in our own country, and in Switzerland, where the women in general are the chastest in Europe, that this curse should fall the heaviest; it is probably owing to the elimate. In cold, but more particularly in mountainous countries, births are difficult and dangerous; in warm and low places they are more easy; the air of the first hardens and contracts the fibres, that of the fecond foftens and relaxes them. In some places in Switzerland, and amongst the Alps, they lose almost one half of their women in child-bed, and those that can afford it, often go down to the low countries fome weeks before they lie in, and find their deliveries much easier. One may easily conceive what a change it must make upon the whole frame, to add the pressure of a column of air of two or three thousand feet more than it is accustomed to: and if muscular motion is performed by the pressure of the atmosphere, as some alledged, how much must this add to the action of every muscle!---However, if this hypothesis were true, our strength should have been diminished one third on the top of Ætna, which did not appear to be the case, as we had passed through one third of the quantity of air of the whole atmosphere. I have often thought that physicians pay too little attention to these considerations; and that in skilful hands they might be turned to great account, in the cure of many difeafes: they only fend their patients to fuch a degree of latitude, but never think of the degree of altitude in the atmosphere. Thus, people with the

fame complaints are fent to Aix and to Marfeilles, although the air, in these two places must be essentially different. Marseilles is on the level of the sea. and Aix (as I myself measured it) is near 600 feet above it.-Now I am perfuaded, that in fuch a country as Switzerland, or on fuch a mountain as Ætna, where it is easy at all times to take off a presfure from the human body of many thousand pounds weight, that an ingenious physician might make great discoveries; nor indeed would these discoveries be confined to the changing of the quantity of air that presses on the body, but would likewife be extended to the changing the quality of the air we breathe; which, on the fide of Atna, or any very high mountain, is more varied than in travelling through fifty degrees of latitude. I beg pardon for this digression; the only amends I can make, is to put it out of my power to trouble you with any more, and thus abruptly affure you how much, &c. appoint right Hibbertian and appoint of which w

tooks, the able is lerved with elegance and mappin-LETTER XXIII. as many who ears off a former as plates as leady

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Palermo, June 26th.

OUR fonduess for Palermo increases every day, and we are beginning to look forward with regret to the time of our leaving it, which is now fast approaching. We have made acquaintance with many sensible and agreeable people. The Sicilians appear frank and fincere; and their politeness does

not confift in flew and grimace, like some of the polite nations of the continent. The viceroy fets the pattern of hospitality, and he is followed by the rest of the nobles. He is an amiable, agreeable man, and I believe is as much beloved and esteemed as a viceroy to an absolute monarch can be. He was in England in his youth, and is still fond of mapy of our authors, with whom he feems to be intimately acquainted; he speaks the language tolerably well, and encourages the learning of it amongst his people.—He may be confidered with regard to Naples, as what the lord lieutenant of Ireland is with regard to England, with this triffing difference, that, like his mafter, he is invested with absolute authority, and keeps his parliament (for he has one too) in the most perfect subjection. The patriots here, although a very numerous body, have never been able to gain one point, no nor a place, nor even a pension for a needy friend. Had lord Townshend the power of the marquis Fogliano, I suppose your Hibernian squabbles (of which we hear so much, even at this distant corner) would foon have an end.—Notwithstanding this great authority, he is affable and familiar, and makes his house agreeable to every body. We go very often to his affemblies, and have dined with him feveral times; his table is ferved with elegance and magnificence, much superior indeed to that of his Sicilian majesty, who eats off a service of plate, at least 300 years old, very black and rufty indeed: I heard a gentleman ask one day, whilst we were standing round the table, if it had not been dug out of Herculaneum. That of the viceroy is very elegant, and indeed the whole of his entertainments correspond with it; though we have as yet feen nothing here, to be compared to the luxury of our feast in the granary at Agrigentum. ur feitible and agreeable propile. The Storland The Sicilian cookery is a mixture of the French and Spanish; and the Olio still preserves its rank and dignity in the centre of the table, surrounded by a numerous train of fricasses, fricandeaus, ragouts, and pet de loups; like a grave Spanish Don, amidst a number of little smart marquis.— The other nobility, whom we have had occasion to see, are likewise very magnificent in their entertainments; but most particularly in their deserts and ices, of which there is a greater variety than I have feen in any other country. They are very temperate with regard to wine; though, fince we have taught them our method of toaffing ladies they are fond of, and of hob and nobbing with their friends, ringing the two glasses together; this focial practice has animated them so much, that they have been sometimes led to drink a greater quantity than they are accustomed to; and they often reproach us with having made them drunkards. In their ordinary living they are very frugal and temperate; and from the fobriety we have feen here, we are now more perfuaded that the elevated fituation of Agrigentum must be one great cause of its drunkenness and add

The Sicilians have always had the character of being very amorous, and furely not without reason. The whole nation are poets, even the peasants; and a man stands a poor chance for a mistress, that is not capable of celebrating her praises. I believe it is generally allowed that the pastoral poetry had its origin in this island; and Theocritus, after whom they still copy, will ever be looked upon as the prince of pastoral poets. And indeed in music too, as well as poetry, the soft, amorous pieces are generally stilled, Sucilians; these they need to play all night under their mistresses windows; to express the delicacy of their passion; but serenading is not now so much in sashion, as it was during the time of their more intimate connection with Spain, when

it was faid by one of their authors, that no person could pass for a man of gallantry that had not got a cold; and was fure never to fucceed in making love, unless he made it in a hoarse voice. The ladies are not now fo rigid, and will fometimes condefcend to hear a man, even although he should speak in a clear tone. Neither do they any longer require the prodigious martial feats, that were then necessary to win them.—The attacking of a mad bull, or a wild boar, was reckoned the handsomest compliment a lover could pay to his mistress; and the putting these animals to death softened her heart much more than all the fighing love fick tales that could be invented. This has been humourously ridiculed by one of their poets. He fays that Cupid's little golden dart was now changed into a malfy fpear, which answered a double purpose; for at the same time that it pierced the tough bull's hide, it likewife pierced the tender lady's heart.-But thefe Gothick customs are now confined to Spain, and the gentle Sicilians have reaffumed their foftness. To tell you the truth, gallantry is pretty much upon the same footing here as in Italy, the establishment of Ciccifbees is pretty general, though not quite for universal as on the continent. However, a breach of the marriage vow is no longer looked upon as one of the deadly fins, and the confessors fall upon easy and pleasant enough methods of making them atone for it. The husbands are content; and, like able generals, make up for the loss of one fortress, By the taking of another. However, female licentiousnels has by no means come to such a height as in Italy. We have feen a great deal of domestic happines; husbands and wives that truly love one another, and whose mutual care and pleasure is the education of their children. I could name a number; The duke of Verdura, the prince Partana, the count Brufcemi, and many others who live in the

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the most facred union. Such fights are very rate on the continent. But indeed the flyle that young people are brought up in here, feems to lay a much more folid foundation for matrimonial happiness, than either in France or Italy. The young ladies are not shut up in convents till the day of their marriage, but for the most part live in the house with their parents, where they receive their education, and are every day in company with their friends and relations. From what I can observe, I think they are allowed almost as much liberty as with us. In their great affemblies, we often fee a club of young people (of both fexes) get together in a corner, and amuse themselves for hours, at cross purposes, or such like games, without the mothers being under the least anxiety; indeed, we sometimes join in these little parties, and find them extremely entertaining. In general, they are quick and lively, and have a number of those jeaux d'esprit, which I think must ever be a proof, in all countries, of the familiar intercourse betwixt the young people of the two fexes; for all these games are inlipid, if they are not feafoned by fomething of that invisible and subtile agency, which renders every thing more interesting in these mixed societies, than in the lifeless ones, composed of only one part of the species. Thus, in Italy, Spain, and Portugal, I have never feen any of these games; in France feldom, but in Switzerland, (where the greatest liberty and familiarity is enjoyed amongst the young people) they are numberless.—But the conversation hour is arrived, and our carriage is waiting.

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Adieu,

LETTER XXIV.

Palermo, June 28.

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THERE are two small countries, one to the east, the other to the west of this city, where the principal nobility have their country palaces.—Both these we have visited; there are many noble houses in each of them. That to the east is called La Bagaria, that to the west Il Colle.—We are this instant returned from La Bagaria, and I hasten to give you an account of the ridiculous things we have seen, though perhaps you will not thank me for it.

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The palace of the prince of Valguarnera is, I think, by much the finest and most beautiful of all the houses of the Bagaria; but it is far from being the most extraordinary: were I to describe it, I should only tell you of things you have often seen and heard of in other countries, so I shall only speak of one, which, for its singularity, certainly is not to be paralleled on the face of the earth: it belongs to the Prince of P——, a man of immense fortune, who has devoted his whole life to the study of monsters and chimeras, greater and more ridiculous than ever entered into the imagination of the wildest writers of romance or knight-errantry.

The amazing crowd of statues that surround his house, appear at a distance like a little army drawn up for its desence; but when you get amongst them, and every one assumes his true likeness, you amagine you have got into the regions of delusion and enchantment; for of all that immense group, there is not one made to represent any object in nature;

nor is the absurdity of the wretched imagination that created them less astonishing than its wonderful fertility. It would require a volume to describe the whole, and a fad volume indeed it would make. He has put the heads of men to the bodies of every fort of animals, and the heads of every other anses mal to the bodies of men. Sometimes he makes a compound of five or fix animals that have no fort of refemblance in nature, He puts the head of a lion to the neck of a goofe, the body of a lizard, the legs of a goat, the tail of a fox. On the back of this monster, he puts another, if possible still more hideous, with five or fix heads, and a bush of horns, that beats the beaft in the Revelations all to nothing. There is no kind of horn in the world that he had not collected; and his pleasure is, to fee them all flourishing upon the same head. This is a strange species of madness; and it is truly unaccountable that he has not been flut up many years ago; but he is perfectly innocent, and troubles nobody by the indulgence of his phrenzy; on the contrary, he gives bread to a number of statuaries and other workmen, whom he rewards in proportion as they can bring their imaginations to coincide with his own tor, in other words, according ing to the hideousness of the monsters they produce. It would be idle and tirefome to be particular in account of these absurdities. The statues that adorn, or rather reform the great avenue, and furround the court of the nalace, amount already to 600, not with flanding which, it may be truly faid, that be has not broke the ferond commandment; for of all that number, there is not the likeness of any thing in heaven above, in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth. The old ornaments which were put up by his father, who was a fenfible maniappear to have been in a good tafte. They have allo been knocked to pieces, and laid together in a heap, to make room for this new creation. The

The infide of this inchanted callle corresponds exactly with the out; it is in every respect as whimfical and famaffical, s and you cannot turn your felf to any fide, where you are not flared in the face by fome hideous figure or other. Some of the apartments are spacious and magnificent, with high arched roofs; which instead of plaister or stucco, are composed entirely of large mirrors, nicely joined together. The effect that these produce (as each of them make a small angle with the other,) is exactly that of a multiplying glass; so that when three or four people are walking below, there is always the appearance of three or four hundred walking above. The whole of the doors are likewife covered over with small pieces of mirror, cut into the most ridiculous shapes and intermixed with a great variety of crystal and glass of different colours. All the chimney pieces, windows, and fideboards are crouded with pyramids and pillars of tea-pots, caudle-cups, bowls, cups, faucers, &c. strongly cemented together; some of these columns are not without their beauty: one of them has a large china chamber pot for its bale, and a circle of pretty little flower pots for its capital : the shaft of the column, upwards of four feet long, is come posed entirely of tea-pots of different fizes, diminishing gradually from the base to the capital. The profusion of china that has been employed in forma ing these columns is incredible; I dare say there is not less than forty pillars and pyramids formed in this strange fautastic mameryam it danding which

Most of the rooms are paved with fine marble tables of different colours, that look like for many tomb-stones. Some of these are richly wrought with lapis lazuli, prophyry, and other valuable flones; their fine polish is now gone, and they only appear like common marble; the place of these beautiful tables he has supplied by a new fet of his own inminoirney. to make room for this new creations vention, some of which are not without their merit. These are made of the finest tortoise-shell mixed with mother of pearl, ivory, and a variety of metals; and are mounted on fine stands of solid brass.

The windows of this inchanted castle are composed of a variety of glass of every different colours, mixed without any fort of order or regularity. Blue, red, green, yellow, purple, violet.—So that at each window, you have the heavens and earth of whatever colour you choose, only by looking through the pane that pleases you.

The house clock is cased in the body of a statue; the eyes of the figure move with the pendulum, turning up their white and black alternately, and

make a hideous appearance.

His bed-chamber and dreffing-room are like two apartments in Noah's ark; there is scarce a beast, however vile, that he has not placed there; toads, frogs, serpents, lizards, scorpions, all cut out in marble, of their respective colours. There are a good many busts too, that are not less singularly imagined.—Some of these make a very handsome profile on one fide; turn to the other, and you have a skeleton; here you see a nurse with a child in her arms; its back is exactly that of an infant; it is that of a wrinkled old woman of ninety.

For some minutes one can laugh at these sollies, but indignation and contempt soon get the better of your mirth, and the laugh is turned into a sneer. I own I was soon tired of them; though some things are so strangely fancied, that it may well excuse a

little mirth, even from the most rigid cynic.

The family statues are charming; they have been done from some old pictures, and make a most venerable appearance; he has dressed them out from head to soot, in new and elegant suits of marble; and indeed the effect it produces is more ridiculous than any thing you can conceive. Their shoes are

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all of black marble, their stockings generally of red; their cloaths are of different colours, blue, green, and variegated with a rich lace of giall' antique. The perriwigs of the men and head-dresses of the ladies are of fine white; so are their shirts, with long slowing russes of alabaster. The walls of the house are covered with some fine basso relievos of white marble, in good taste; these he could not well take out, or alter, so he has only added immense frames to them. Each frame is composed of sour

large marble tables.

The author and owner of this fingular collection is a poor miserable lean figure, shivering at a breeze, and seems to be afraid of every body he speaks to: but what surprised me, I have heard him talk speciously enough on several occasions. He is one of the richest subjects in the island, and it is thought he has not laid out less than 20,000 pounds in the creation of this world of monsters and chimeras.—He certainly might have fallen upon some way to prove himself a fool at a cheaper rate. However he gives bread to a number of poor people, to whom he is an excellent master. His house at Palermo is a good deal in the same stile: his carriages are covered with plates of brass, so that I really believe some of them are musket proof:

The government have had ferious thoughts of demolishing the regiment of monsters he has placed round his house, but as he is humane and inossensive, and as this would certainly break his heart, they have as yet forborne. However, the seeing of them by women with child is said to have been already attended with very unfortunate circumstances; severalliving monsters having been brought forth in the neighbourhood. The ladies complain that they dare no longer take an airing in the Bagaria; that some hideous form always haunts their imagination for some time after: their husbands too, it is said,

Adieum of shall write you again by next post, as a matter multiplies fast upon me in this metropolis.

They have begun some weeks ago to make preparasimovinovae great seatt of Str Rosolia; and our triends here say they are determined that weshall not least them till after it is over abut this least an askand will not be in our power. The warm season act and will not be in our power of the warm our return to haples is already elapsed; but, indeed, return when we will, we shall make but a bad exchange, and were at not for those of our certainly it. VXX hava decident of the hond us, we certainly it. VXX hava decident here is superior to that of haples, ver seal at prejudice—or call it.

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tain Atow and character the worth and. THE account the people here give of the Sirocco, or South east wind, is truly wonderful; today, at the viceroy's, we were complaining of the violence of the heat, the thermometer being at 79. -They affured us, that if we flaid till the end of next month, we should probably look on this as pleafant cool weather; adding, that if we had once experienced the Sirocco, all other weather will appear temperate.—I alked to what degree the thermometer commonly role during this wind; but found to my surprise that here was no such instrument in use amongst them: however, the violence of it, they affure us, is incredible; and that those who had remained many years in Spain and Malta, had never felt any heat in those countries to compare to it.-How it happens to be more violent in Palernio than in any other part of Sicily, is a myftery that Ilill remains to be unfolded. Several treatiles have been written on this subject, but none that give any tolerable degree of fatisfaction. As

we shall stay for some time longer, it is possible we may have an opportunity of giving you some account of it.

They have begun fome weeks ago to make preparations for the great feast of St. Rosolia; and our friends here fay they are determined that we shall not leave them till after it is over; but this I am afraid will not be in our power. The warm feafon advances, and the time we appointed for our return to Naples is already elapsed; but, indeed, return when we will, we shall make but a bad exchange; and were it not for those of our own country whom we have left behind us, we certainly should have determined on a much longer stay. But although the society here is superior to that of Naples, yet,—call it prejudice—or call it what you will, there is a-je ne scai quoi,-a certain confidence in the character, the worth, and friendship of our own people, that I have seldon felt any where on the continent, except in Switzer-This fensation, which constitutes the charm of fociety, and can alone render it supportable for any time, is only inspired by something analogous, and fympathetic, in our feelings and fentiments; like two instruments that are in unison, and vibrate to each other's touch; for fociety is a concert, and if the instruments are not in tune, there never can be harmony; and (to carry on the metaphor) this harmony too must sometimes be heighteued and supported by the introduction of a discord; but where discords predominate, which is often the ease between an English and an Italian mind, the music must be wretched indeed.-Had we but a little mixture of our own fociety, how gladly should we spend the winter in Sicily; but we often think with regret on Mr. Hamilton's and Mr. Walter's families; and wish again to be on the continent.—Indeed, even the pleasures we enjoy here, we owe principally to Mr. Hamilton; his recommendations we have ever found to be the best passport and introduction; and the zeal and cordiality with which these are always received, proceeds evidently not from motives of deserence and respect to the minister, but of love and affection to the man.

This morning we went to fee a celebrated convent of capuchins, about a mile without the city; it contains nothing very remarkable but the burial place, which indeed is a great curiofity. This is a vast fubterraneous apartment, divided into large commodious galleries, the walls on each fide of which are hollowed into a variety of niches, as if intended for a great collection of statues, these niches, instead of statues, are all filled with dead bodies, fet upright upon their legs, and fixed by the back to the infide of the nich: their number is about three hundred; they are all dreffed in the clothes they usually wore, and form a most respectable and venerable affembly. The skin and muscles, by a certain preparation, become as dry and hard as a piece of flock-fish; and although many of them have been here upwards of two hundred and fifty years, yet none are reduced to skeletons; the muscles, indeed, in some appear to be a good deal more shrunk than in others; probably because these perfons had been more extenuated at the time of their death.

Here the people of Palermo pay daily visits to their deceased friends, and recall with pleasure and regret the scenes of their past life: here they familiarize themselves with their future state, and choose the company they would wish to keep in the other world. It is a common thing to make choice of their nich, and to try if their body fits it, that no alterations may be necessary after they are dead; and sometimes, by way of a voluntary penance, they accustom

accustom themselves to stand for hours in these niches.

The bodies of the princes and first nobility are lodged in handsome chests or trunks, some of them richly adorned: these are not in the shape of cosfins, but all of one width, and about a foot and a half, or two seet deep. The keys are kept by the nearest relations of the samily, who sometimes come

and drop a tear over their departed friends.

I am not fure if this is not a better method of disposing of the dead than ours. These visits must prove admirable lessons of humility; and I assure you, they are not fuch objects of horror as you would imagine: they are faid, even for ages after death, to retain a strong likeness to what they were when alive; fo that, as foon as you have conquered the first feelings excited by these venerable figures, you only confider this as a vast gallery of original portraits, drawn after the life, by the justest and most unprejudiced hand. It must be owned that the colours are rather faded; and the pencil does not appear to have been the most flattering in the world; but no matter, it is the pencil of truth, and not of a mercenary, who only wants to pleafe. We were alledging too, that it might be made of very confiderable utility to fociety; and that these dumb orators could give the most pathetic lectures upon pride and vanity. Whenever a fellow began to ftrut, like Mr. B. or to affect the haughty supercilious air, he should be sent to converse with his friends in the gallery; and if their arguments did not bring him to a proper way of thinking, I would give him up as incorrigible.

At Bologna they shewed us the skeleton of a celebrated beauty, who died at a period of life when she was still the object of universal admiration. By way of making atonement for her own vanity, she bequeathed herself as a monument, to curb the vanity of others. Recollecting on her death-bed the great adulation that had been paid to her charms, and the fatal change they were foon to undergo, the ordered that her body should be diffected, and her bones hung up for the inspection of all young maidens who are inclined to be vain of their beauty. However, if she had been preserved in this moral gallery, the lesson would have been stronger; for those very features that had raised her vanity would still have remained, only divested of all their power, and disarmed of every charm.

Some of the Capuchins sleep in these galleries every night, and pretend to have many wonderful visions and revelations; but the truth is, that very

few people believe them.

No woman is ever admitted into this convent either dead or alive: and this interdiction is written in large characters over the gate. The poor indolent Capuchins, the frailest of all sless, have great need of fuch precautions: they have no occupation from without, and they have no refources within themselves, so that they must be an easy prey to every temptation: Bocaccio, and all the books of that kind, are filled with flories of their frailty. Yesterday, dining at the Prince of Sperlinga's, and talking on this subject, the Abbe T gave us an anecdote of a friend of his, who was formerly a brother of this convent. He is known by the name of Fra Pasqual, and has passed through many fingular feenes of life, which it would be too long to recount? His last migration, or, if you will, transmigration, was from one of the banditti of this kingdom, in which capacity he had been enrolled for fome time; but, tired of the danger and fatigue to which he was perpetually exposed, he at last determined to exchange the character of the hero, for that of the faint, and try if it was not both fafer and furer, to rely on the weakness of others, than on our own strength.

Fra Pasqual pretended a strong compunction for the transgressions of his past life, and made a promile to the Virgin, that the remainder of it should be spent in mortification and penance, to atone for them. To this end, Pasqual took the vows of poverty and of chaffity, and entered into all the rigours of the monastic life. For some weeks he behaved in a most exemplary manner; he went barefooted, wore a large rolary, and a thicker cord of discipline than any monk in the convent; and his whole deportment gave testimony of the most unfeigned repentance; however, the devil was still at work in the heart of Pasqual, and all these external mortifications only made him work the harder: in short, he found it impossible to drive him out: Pasqual was sensible of this; and asraid lest the enemy should at last get the better of him, he thought it adviseable to leave at Palermo the character of fanctity he had acquired, and begin fomes where elfe, upon a new score. He embarked for Naples, where he was foon admitted into a Capuchin convent. in themselves forthat

As Pasqual knew from experience that the dull uniformity of the monastic life required some little amusements to render it supportable, the first thing he let about was to find a mistress. He made love to a lady of easy virtue, who soon admitted his addrefles, but at the same time informed him, that he had a formidable rival, who was jealous as a tiger, and would not fail to put them both to death, should he discover the intrigue. This was no other than a lifeguard-man, a fellow of fix feet two inches high, with a vast spada, like that of Goliah, and a monftrous pair of curled whilkers, that would have cast a damp on the heart of any man but Fra Pasquel; but the monastic life had not yet enervated him; be was accustomed to danger, and loved a few difficulties: however, as in his present characas terind could hold be be a footing of the his tise? he thought it with bally to make the official dense his said and the eccleration of the history have generally been 18640 to 8650 hard for the history have generally been 18640 to 300 hard for the military been and when the foldier and were dynamic many too

The larly promiled him all there en vas foundais the court hould go to Poulei, where the little wat as 8 man's duty obliged him to nevent the king! opan v qual-waited with imparience for fome times hat and the wified for higher arrived in the sting letter, usticros the depera, with all his graves on Parotal and med lightning to the arms of his militeled the prephatin natics were foundettled, and the happy lovers had w just fallen afleep, when they were fuddenty alarmed ! by a bap and a well known voice at the doors of the lady started up in an agony of despair, affuring Pal200 qualithat they were both undonequitatithis was her us lovering action formed expedient was not full en up battle in the field transports of his furp, he would certain to ly pail the appoint of death and there was not the forest reflection) a hedrifeguard manudemanded entrance in bal the model peremprony manner, and the lady was as within speit dample Linguis frequences hundred Tore bedgildo time towarhershisarage rogether, band, eram himfelfort in below the bedly anthavinflant the door opened lo and vier giano cancerin mateling this arine and hormola! ing at his mistress, for having made him waite formel long bloweder the foon paditied him w He then or derech home of trike a big best that the might ofee to land off drefsi babisishmad. Pulquali to the flowh, and he gave bus himself uprafore bolt or however, such pilative actioners of faved him moherohe leaftlexpedied it. buln abridging val the tinderoche took dare collet fall some water into the box; and all the beating the and herelover could will beat, il they could need produces one if parkid Every 1012 ftroke of while him mounded on Paliqual's wears like his yld death-kubiha buruwkenbheobeadaithe lifegalard-hani am fwearing at the sinder for anothindling, he began !!

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to conceive some hopes, and blessed the fertile invention of woman. The lady told him he might eafily get a light at the guard, which was at no great distance.-Pafqual's heart leaped with joy;but when the foldier answered that he was absent without leave, and durst not be feen, it again began to flag; but on his ordering her to go—it died within him, and he now found himself in greater danger than ever. The lady herfelf was disconcerted; but quickly recovering, she told him, it would be too long before the could get dreffed; but advised him to go to the corner of a neighbouring street, where there was a lamp burning before the Virgin Mary, who could have no objection to his lighting a candle at it.—Pasqual revived;—but the soldier declared he was too much fatigued with his walk, and would rather undress in the dark; he at the fame time began to grope below the bed for a bottle of liqueurs, which he knew stood there.-Pasqual shook like a quaker, however, still he escaped. The lady observing what he was about, made a spring, and got him the bottle, at the very instant he was within an inch of feizing Pasqual's head.—The lady then went to bed, and told her lover, as it was a cold night, she would warm his place for him. Pasqual admired her address, and began to conceive fome hopes of escaping.

His fituation was the most irksome in the world; the bed was so low, that he had no room to move; and when the great heavy lifeguard-man entered it, he sound himself squeezed down to the ground. He lay trembling and stifling his breath for some time, but sound it absolutely impossible to support his situation till morning; and indeed, if it had, his clothes, which were scattered about, must infallibly discover him: he therefore began to think of making his escape; but he could not move without alarming his rival, who was now lying above him.

At first he thought of rushing suddenly out, and throwing himself into the street; but this he difdained, and, on fecond thoughts determined to feize the lifeguard-man's fword, and either put him to death, or make an honourable capitulation both for himself and the lady. In the midst of these reflections, his rival began to snore, and Pasqual declares that no music was ever so grateful to his soul. He tried to ftir a little, and finding that it did not awake the enemy, he by degrees worked himself out of his prison. He immediately laid hold of the great spada; -when all his fears forfook him, and he felt as bold as a lion. He now relinquished the dastardly scheme of escaping, and only thought how he could best retaliate on his rival, for all that he had made him fuffer.

As Pasqual was stark naked, it was no more trouble to him to put on the foldier's cloaths than his own; and as both his cloak and his cappouch together were not worth fixpence, he thought it most eligible to equip himself á la militaire, and to leave his facerdotal robes to the foldier. In a short time he was dreffed cap-a-pie. His greafy cowl, his cloak, his fandals, his rofary, and his rope of difcipline, he gathered together, and placed on a chair before the bed; and girding himself with a great buff belt, instead of the cordon of St. Francis, and grasping his trusty toledo instead of the crucifix, he fallied forth into the fireet. He pondered for some time what scheme to fall upon; and at first thought of returning in the character of another lifeguardman, pretending to have been fent by the officer with a guard in quest of his companion, who not being found in his quarter, was supposed to have deferred: and thus, after having made him pay heartily for all he had fuffered under the bed, to leave him to the enjoyment of his pannic, and the elegant fuit of clothes he had provided him. How-

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ever, he was not fatisfied with this revenge, and determined on one still more solid. He went to the guard, and told the officer that he had met a Capuchin friar, with all the ensigns of his fanctity about him, sculking through the streets, in the dead of night, when they pretend to be employed in prayer for the fins of mankind. That prompted by curiosity to follow him, the holy friar as he expected went strait to the house of a celebrated courtezan; that he saw him admitted, and listened at the window till he heard them go to bed together: that if he did not find this information to be true, he should resign himself his prisoner, and submit to what-

ever punishment he should think proper.

The officer and his guard, delighted to have such a hold of a Capuchin, (who pretend to be the very models of fanctity, and who revile in a particular manner the licentious life of the military) turned out with the utmost alacrity, and, under the conduct of Pasqual surrounded the lady's house. Pasqual began thundering at the door, and demanded entrance for the officer and his guard. The unhappy foldier waking with the noise, and not doubting that it was a detachment fent to feize him, gave himself up to despair, and instantly took shelter in the very place that Pasqual had so lately occupied; at the fame time laying hold of all the things he found on the chair, never doubting that they were his own clothes. As the lady was fomewhat dilatory in opening the door, Pasqual pretended to put his foot to it, when up it flew, and entering with the officer and his guard, demanded the body of a Capuchin friar, who, they were informed, lodged with her that night. The lady had heard Pasqual go out, and having no suspicion that he would inform against himself, she protested her innocence in the most folemn manner, taking all the faints to witness that she knew no such person: but Pasqual R 2 fuspecting

haps detecting him, he Therefore TetAded reach

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gridory mayed, revelting much that he was gridory may ant guinequit below the bed, and Gon pulled out his own greaty cowl and cloak; Here (laid he to the officer) " bere are proofs enough : 13 aniwer for it " Signor Padre himself is at no great diffance." And putting his nose below the bed ;-" Fogff (13%) "he) I smell him;—he stinks like a fox. The surest method of finding a Capuchin, is by the sonoic; you may wind him a mile off." Indo Then lowering their leadings. lowering their lantern, they beheld the unfortunate lover squeezed in betwixt the bed and ground, fand almost stitled—" Ecco lo, (said Pasqual) here he is, with all the ensigns of his holines;" and pulling them out one by one, the crucifix, the rolary, and the cond of discipline.—" You may see (said to be) that the reverend father came here to do " pennance " and taking up the cord fupto pole now, we should assist him in this meritorious work Andiamo, Signer Padre,—andiamo.—We so will save you the trouble of inflicting it yourself self; and whether you came here to fin, or to off repent by your own maxims, you know, a lit-The guard were lying round the bed, in convulions of laughter; and began breaking the most gall-ing and most uniolent jokes upon the supposed Padre The lifeguard-man thought himself enbethanted nelle at last ventured to speak, and declared chin upon which the laugh redoubled, and the coarsest jokes were repeated. The lady, vin the mean time, with the best distembled marks of fear edand affonishment, ran about the room; exclaiming Oime Siamo Perduti, Siamo incantati. Siamo " inforcilati."-Pascal delighted to see that his plan had taken its full effect thought it now time to make his retreat, before the unfortunate lover could have an opportunity of examining his clothes, and perhaps

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haps detecting him; he therefore pretended regimental business, and regretting much that he was obliged to join his corps, took leave of the offi-cer and his guard, at the same time recommending by all means, to treat the holy father with all that reverence and respect that was due to so sacred a A Signor Eadre himself is at

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The lifeguard man, when he got out from be-low the bed, began to look about for his clothes; but observing nothing but the greaty weeds of a Capuchin friar, he was now perfectly convinced, that heaven had delivered him over, for his of fences, to the power of some dæmon; (for of all mortals, the Neapolitan soldiers are the most superflitious)-The lady too acted her part fo well, that he had no longer any doubt of it. Thus it is " (laid he in a penitential voice) to offend heaven! gui I own my fin. I knew it was Friday, and yet of O flesh, flesh!—Had it been any other day, I "fill should have remained what I was O, St. "Gennaro! I pass'd thee too without paying the of due respect;—thy all-feeing eye has found me out. " am not what I feem to be. " No, ho, that the officer) we are femilie of that. But, come, Sigif por Padre, on with your garments, and march;
by we have no time to trifle. Here, Corporal
if giving him the cordon tie his hands, and let be him feel the weight of St. Francis. The Saint ug swes him that, for having to impulently denied on him for his mafter. The poor foldies was per-onfectly pathive; They arrayed him in the fandals, the gowl, and the clock of Fra Palqual, and pur the great rolary about his neck; and a mole weefel fi-great rolary about his neck; and a mole weefel fi-great rolary about his neck; and a mole weefel fi-ongure he made. The officer made him look in the ongure he made. On the officer made him look in the glas, "inforcilati"-Pascal delighted to see that his plan bush retreated which the thought it now time to make his retreat, before the unfortunate lover could be before an opportunity of examining his clothes, and perglass, to try if he could recollect himself, and asked if he was a Capuchin now or not.—He was shocked at his own appearance; but bore every thing with meekness and resignation. They then conducted him to the guard, belabouring him all the way with the cord of St. Francis, and asking him every stroke, if he knew his master now?——

In the mean time, Pasqual was snug in his convent, enjoying the sweets of his adventure. He had a spare cloak and cowl, and was soon equipped again like one of the holy fathers; he then took the clothes and accourrements of the lifeguard-man, and laid them in a heap, near the gate of another convent of Capuchins, but at a great distance from his own, reserving only to himself a trifle of money which he found in the breeches pocket, just to indemnify him for the loss of his cloak and his cowl; and even this, he says, he should have held facred, but he knew whoever should find the clothes,

would make lawful prize of it.

The poor foldier remained next day a spectacle of ridicule to all the world; at last his companions heard of his strange metamorphosis, and came in troops to see him: their jokes were perhaps still more galling than those of the guard, but as he thought himself under the finger of God, or at least St. Januarius, he bore all with meekness and patience; at last his clothes were found, and he was fet at liberty; but he believes to this day, that the whole was the work of the devil, fent to chaffife him for his fins; and has never fince feen his miftress on a Friday, nor passed the statue of St. Januarius without muttering a prayer. Fra Pafqual has told the story to several of his most intimate friends, whom he can depend on, amongst whom is the Abbe T-t-i, who has often had it from his own mouth.

I beg pardon for this long story; had I suspected that it would have run out to half this length, I

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affure you, I should not have troubled you with it. Perhaps, however, you will think this apology precisely the most unnecessary, and most impertinent part of it all.—This is often the fate of apologies, particularly for long letters: First, because it always makes them longer; —Secondly, —Hey-day! where are we going now? —To return then to our fubject. We had no sooner lest the Capuchin convent, than our carriage broke down, long before we reached the city: and as walking (at Palermo as well as Naples) is of all things the most disgrace. ful, we risked by this unfortunate accident to have our characters blafted for ever. However, Philip, our Sicilian fervant, took care to make fuch a noise about it, that our dignity did not much fuffer. He kept a little distance before us, pesting and blasting all the way at their curfed crazy carriages; -and fwearing that there never was anything in the world fo infamous; that in a city like Palermo, the capital of all Sicily, Signori of our rank and dignity should be obliged to walk on foot; that it must be an eternal reflection against the place,—and bawled out to every person he met, if there was no coaches to be had; no carriages of any kind, either for love or money. In short, we had not got half through the street, before we had several offers from gentlemen of our acquaintance, who lamented exceedingly the indignity we had fuffered, and wondered much, that we did not rather fend forward a fervant for another coach, and wait (in the heat of the fun) till it arrived.

This is not the only time that Philip's wits have been of service to us on such occasions. A few nights ago, we had a dispute with our coachman; turned him off, and had not provided another. We were unfortunately engaged to go to the great conversation. What was to be done?—No such thing as walking.—Should we be caught in the sact, we

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were diffgraced for ever. It would be worse than to be caught in that of adultery! No ahernative, however. There was not a coach to be had, and our old coachman would not ferve us for one night only. Philip made lad wry faces, and twore the coachman ought to be crucified; but when he faw us bent on walking, he was fill more diffrested; and I really believe, if we had been discovered, what he would not have ferved us any longer. Her herefore let his wits to work, how he inould oreserve both his maffer's hondur and his own placed? He at first hehrafed, before he would rake house hombeau, but he would by no means be prevailed onto light it, What (faid Philip) do you think I have no more regard for you, than to expose you bus to the eyes of the whole world? Nos Ho, Genque flemen, if you will bring yourfelves to difgrate, 129 Von thall not at least make me the agent of shewdising it but femember, if you are observed walking, in mortal will believe you keep a coach; and do you expect after that to be received into or company au 12 Well, well, Philip, adotas you Philip thrugged up his thoulders. "Diabolo-che Taying, he led the way, and we followed the Philip had fludded the geography of the town: Re conducted us through lanes only known to himleft, Tand carefully avoided the great street anilli at lan We arrived at a Heile entry? which leads to the Convertation rooms; Here the carriages unality flop. 18 his ped up the entry in the dark i when whilip, darling into a thop, highted his nambeau in an inhant, and came rathing before us, bawting out, metworld immediately made why for us. After we had

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turn,

torn that, evercome partly by rifibility, and partdy by a confoionfuels of the decent, not one of us had powertto answer him; Philip however, foloszam a pilogat a emid avig az bagida arawabe off notae," ind At smidnight he came to tell us that the edagh was ready. We were curious to lee bow he would behave on this occasion; for it was monthalf fo difficult to get in unobserved, as to get south however, Philip's genius was equal to both. te off So foon as we got into the entry, he run to the door bawling out Antonio as hard as he could roar balls No Autonio answered : and unfortu-Inately, there was a number of gentlemen and ladies going away at the fame time. They begged of as frangers, to flep first into our carriage, and absolutely resuled to go out before us. Philip was fadly puzzled. He first ran up the street, then he ran down, and came back all out of breath, curing Antonio. "That raical (laid he) is never offinethe way, and you must turn him off. He pretends that he could not get up his coach to "the door, for the great croud of carriages, and sas is waiting about tifty yards below. Vostri of Eccelenzi had better step down (laid Philip) " otherwise you will be obliged to wait here at "wheaft half an hour."-We took leave of the company, and fet off. Philip ran like a lamp-lighter, sailli he had almost passed the carriages, when dashsing his flambeau on the ground, as if by accident, he waited till we came up, when he whilpered us to follow him, and conducted us back by the fame labyrinth we had come; and thus faved us ofrom eternal infamy. However, he affures us, behat he will not venture it again for his place. Mr. Now, what do you think of a nation where fuch prejudices as these prevail; -It is pretty much the cale

case all over Italy.—An Italian pobleman is ashamed of nothing so much as making use of his legs. They think their dignity augments by the repose of their members; and that no man can be truly respectable, that does not loll away one half of his time on a fofa, or in a carriage. In fhort, a man is obliged to be indolent and effeminate, not to be despised and ridiculous.—What can we expect of fuch a people? Can they be capable of any thing great or manly, who feem almost ashamed to appear men? I own, it furpasses my comprehenfion; and I bless my stars every time that I think of honest John Bull, even with all his faults. Will you believe me, that, of all that I have known in Italy, there are scarce half a dozen that have had fortitude enough to fubdue this most contemptible. of all human prejudices?—The Prince of Campo. Franco too in this place, is above it. He is a noble fellow, and both in his person and character. greatly refembles our late worthy friend, General Crauford. He is a major-general too, and always dreffes in his uniform, which still increases the refemblance. Every time I fee him, he fays or does fomething that recalls firongly to my mind the idea. of our noble general.—He laughs at the follies. of his country, and holds these wretched prejudices in that contempt they deserve. -- "What would " the old hardy Romans think, (fays he, talking " on this subject) were they permitted to take a "view of the occupations of their progeny?-I " should like to see a Brutus or a Cassius amought " us for a little; how the clumfy vulgar fellows " would be hooted,—I dare fay they would foon " be glad to return to the shades again."

Adieu; for some nights past we have been observing the course of a comet; and as we were the first people here that took notice of it, I assure you, we are looked upon as very prosound astronomers.

mers. I shall say more of it in my next letter. We have now got out of our abominable inn, and have taken a final leave of our French landlady. The Count Bushemi, a very amiable young man, has been kind enough to provide us lodging on the fea-shore; one of the coolest and most agreeable in Palermo.

Ever your's, &c.

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OUR comet is now gone; we first observed it on the 24th. It had no tail, but was furrounded with a faintish ill defined light, that made it look like a bright star shining through a thin cloud. This, in all probability, is owing to an atmosphere, around the body of the comet, that causes a refraction of the rays, and prevents them from reaching us with that distinctness we observe in bodies that have no atmosphere.---We were still the more persuaded of this two nights ago, when we had the good fortune to catch the comet just passing close by a small fixed flar, whose light was not only considerably dimmed but we thought we observed a sensible change of place in the flar, as foon as its rays fell into the atmosphere of the comet; owing no doubt to the refraction in passing through that atmosphere.-We attempted

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attempted to trace the line of the comet's course, but as we could find no globe, it was not possible to do; it, with any degree of precision. Its direction was almost due north, and its velocity altogether amazing. We did not observe it so minutely the two or three first nights of its appearance; but on the 30th it was at our zerotti bere described and are the 30th it was at our zenith here, (latitude 389 pos longitude from Lond, 130) about five minutes after midnight, and last night, the first of July, it passed four degrees to the east of the polar star, nearly at 40 minutes after eight. So that in less than 24 hours, it has described a great arch in the heavens, upwards of 50 degrees; which gives an idea of the most aniazing velocity. Supposing it at the distance. of the fun, at this rate of travelling, it would go round the earth's orbit in less than a week. Which makes, I think, confiderably more than fixty millions of miles in a day; a motion that vally fur palles all human comprehension. And as this motion continues to be greatly accelerated, what must it be, when the comer approaches fill nearer to the body of the fun! Last night a change of place was oblervable in the space of a few minutes particularly when it palled hear any of the fixed flars of We atbut the valt rapidity of its motion always prevented us; for whatever fixed flars it was near in the horizon it had got to tar to the north of them, long beione it reached the meridian, that the parallax, if there was any, entirely eleaped us ward guise rails after the deleaverious that have been made with you, and Hother distant countries, on this comet; as from these we shall probably be enabled to form some judgment of its distance from abe earth; which, although we could believe no special which, although we could believe no parallax. I am apt to believe was not very great, as not construct to be expectable with the could be apparent of the contract of t

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tance from any of the fixed stars, so that the only two observations, any thing can be made of, are, the time of its pailing the polar star last night, its distance from it, and the time of its arrival at our zenithon, the 30th; this we found by applying the eye to a straight rod, hung perpendicularly from a small thread. The comet was not in the exact point of the zenith, but to the best of our observation, about fix or feven minutes to the north of it. Laft night it was visible almost immediately after fun-fer; long before any of the fixed stars appeared. It is now immerfed in the rays of the fun, and has certainly got very near his body. If it returns again to the regions of space, it will probably be visible in a few days; but I own I should much doubt of any such return, if it is really by the attractive force of the sun, that it is at present carried with such amazing celerity to work the sun again. carried with fuch amazing celerity towards him. This is the third comet of this kind, whose return I have had an opportunity of watching; But never was fortunate enough to find any of them after they had passed the sun; though those that do really return, appear at that time much more luminous than before they approached him.

The astronomy of comets, from what I call remember of it, appears to be clogged with very great difficulties, and even some seeming abilirdities.

It is difficult to conceive that these immense bodies, after being drawn to the chart these immense bodies, after being drawn to the fun with the velocity of a million of miles in an hour; when they have at last come almost to touch him, should then sty off ofrom his body, with the fame velocity they ap-approached it; and that too, by the power of this every motion that his attraction has occasioned. The edemondration of this I remember is very curious band ingenious; but I with it may be entirely free from sophistry. No doubt, in bodies moving in curves round a fixed center, as the centripetal mo-

tion increases, the centrifugal one increases likewise; but how this motion, which is only generated by the former, should at last get the better of the power that produces it, and that too, at the very time this power has acquired its utmost force and energy, feems somewhat difficult to conceive. It is the only instance I know, wherein the effect increasing regularly with the cause, at last, whilst the cause is still acting with full vigour, the effect entirely gets the better of the cause, and leaves it in the lurch. For, the body attracted, is at last carried away with infinite velocity from the attracting body. By what power is it carried away? --- Why, fay our philosophers, by the very power of this attraction, which has nowproduced a new power superior to itself, to wit, the centrifugal force. However, perhaps all this may be reconcilable to reason; far be it from me to prefume attacking fo glorious a system as that of attraction. The law that the heavenly bodies are faid to observe, in describing equal areas in equal times, is supposed to be demonstrated, and by this it would appear, that the centripetal and centrifugal forces alternately get the mastery of one another.

However, I cannot help thinking it somewhat hard to conceive, that gravity should always get the better of the centrifugal force, at the very time that its action is the smallest, when the comet is at its greatest distance from the sun; and that the centrifugal force should get the better of gravity, at the very time that its action is the greatest, when

the comet is at its nearest point to the fun.

To a common observer it would rather appear, that the sun like an electric body, after it had once charged the objects that it attracted with its own effluvia or atmosphere, by degrees loses its attraction, and at last even repels them; and, that the attracting power, like what we likewise observe in electricity, does not return again till the effluvia imbibed from

from the attracting body is dispelled or dissipated when it is again attracted, and so on alternately. For it appears (at least to an unphilosophical observer) somewhat repugnant to reason, to say that a body slying off from another body some thousands of miles in a minute, should all the time be violently attracted by that body, and that it is even by virtue of this very attraction that it is slying off from it. He would probably ask, What more could it do, pray, were it really to be

repelled?

Had the fystem of electricity, and of repulsion as well as attraction been known and established in the last age, I have little doubt that the profound genius of Newton would have called it to his aid; and perhaps accounted in a more fatisfactory manner, for many of the great phænomena of the heavens. To the best of my remembrance, we know of no body that possesses, in any considerable degree, the power of attraction, that in certain circumstances does not likewise possess the power of repulsion.-The magnet, the tourmalin, amber, glass, and every electrical fubitance.—Now from analogy, as we find the fun so powerfully endowed with attraction, why may we not likewife suppose him to be possessed of repulsion? Indeed, this very power seems to be confelled by the Newtonians to refide in the fun in a most wonderful degree; for they affure us he repels the rays of light with fuch amazing force, that they fly upwards of eighty millions of miles in feven minutes. Now why should we confine this repulfion to the rays of light only?—As they are material, may not other matter brought near his body, be effected in the fame manner? Indeed one would imagine, that their motion alone would create the most violent repulsion; and that the force, with which they are perpetually flowing from the fun, would most effectually prevent every other body from approaching him; for this we find is the constant

conflant effect of a rapid fiream of any other matter But let us examine a little more his effects on comets. The tails of these bodies are probably their atmospheres rendered highly electrical, either from the violence of their motion, or from their proximity to the fun.-Of all the bodies we know, there is none in fo conflant and fo violent an electrical state, as the higher regions of our own atmosphere. Of this I have long been convinced; for, fend up a kite with a small wire about its firing, only to the height of 12 or 1300 feet, and at all times it will produce fire, as I have found by frequent experiences fometimes, when the air was perfectly clear, without a cloud in the hemisphere; at other times, when it was thick and hazy, and totally unfit for electrical operations below. Now, as this is the case at so small a height, and as we find the effect fill grows flronger, in proportion as the kite advances, (for I have fometimes observed, that a little blaft of wind, fuddenly raising the kite about a hundred feet, has more than doubled the effect) what must it be in very great elevations? Indeed we may often judge of it from the violence with which the clouds are agitated, from the meteors formed above the region of the clouds, and particularly and from the aurora borealis, which has been observed to have much the same colour and appearance asthe matter that forms the tails of comets, wall and if

Nowwhat must be the effect of fo wast a body as led our atmosphere, made firongly electrical, when it time happens to approach any other body & It must always be either violently attracted on repelled, act cording to the positive or negative quality (in the language of electricians) of the body that it approaches with the bur inflead of this sort wants

It has ever been observed that the tails of comets fiult as we fhould expect, from a very light fluid, and body, attached to a folid heavy one) are drawn af-mon the file a chi to the game of the

ter the corners as long as they are at a distance from on the fund but to formas the comer gets near his body. the tail veers about to that fide of the comet that is 100 in the topposite direction from the fungrand no longer gen follows the comety but continues its motion of fideways, soppoling its whole length to the medium to through which it palles tather than allow it in any of t degreed approach the fun. and deed, its tendency isf to follow the body of the comer is fill observable. O wereit not brevented by some force suberior to that it tendency; storthe tail is always observed to Bending ind little and an fide from whence the comet is if wineborg This perhaps is some proof too, that it does hot and without a cloud in the bearingsvertuloideen a movem

Wheth the comet reaches its perihelion, the tailed w is generally very much lengthened, perhaps observed is rarefaction from the heat perhaps by thenhereafeeles of the fun's repulsion or that of his aunid sphere. His It still continues projected, exactly in the opposite nev direction from the fun mand when the comet moved all off again to the regions of dipaceunt he daile in flead and of following it, as it adid omits approach, in a protect w jected advast way before it and offilis keeps the body years the citizeness is rejusted, belong of the entrement of the citizeness of the citizen fun; ytild by idegrees; asbihe diffunce increases of the vods length of the taibis diminished sithere bullions of o-mort to have much the freshes well as a sales we are a sale as the

It has likewise been observed that the shagehos of thefe tails are common living proportion to the propose N imity of othe consist to the funor That of 168d threws THO out a train what worldia most obare mached from the quant fun to the tealth or Ifo this hade between the ded by the sysw fun, would it not have ifallen upon his drocked when throu the cometiate that which is the same short that the transfer of the same is the come is the same is th diameter distant from him; but instead of this seit sorg was danted a way no the toppostresside of the vheat vens, leven with a greaten wellocley than that of the flui comethitselfab and own what can this be owing to, who if if not to a repullive power to the fun, or his at-

Mande in collection

mosphere?

And, indeed, it would at first appear but little less absurd to say, that the tail of the comet is all this time violently attracted by the fun, although it be driven away in an opposite direction from him, as to fay the same of the comet itself. It is true, this repulsion feems to begin much fooner to affect the tail, than the body of the comet; which is supposed always to pass the sun before it begins to fly away from him, which is by no means the case with the tail. The repulfive force, therefore, (if there is any fuch) is in a much less proportion then the attractive one, and probably just only enough to counter balance the latter, when these bodies are in their perihelions, and to turn them fo much afide as to prevent their falling into the body of the fun. The projectile forcethey have acquired will then carry them out to the heavens, and repulsion probably diminishing as they recede from the fun's atmosphere, his attraction will again take place, and retard their motion regularly, till they arrive at their aphelia, when they once more begin to return to him. something so pit seed your dond it of

I don't know how you will like all this :- Our comet has led me a dance I very little thought of; and I believe I should have done better to fend it at once into the fun, and have done with it: and that, indeed. I am apt to believe, will be its fate. For as this comet has no tail, there is, of consequence, no apparent repulsion. If it was repelled, its atmosphere, like the others, would be driven away in the opposite direction from the fun; I therefore do not see any possible method it has of escapings

These comets are certainly bodies of a very different nature from those with tails, to which indeed they appear even to bear a much less resemblance than they do to planets: and it is no small proof of

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the little progress we have made in the knowledge of the universe, that they have not as yet been dis-

tinguished by a different name.

This is the third kind of body that has been discovered in our fystem, that all appear essentially different from each other, that are probably regulated by different laws, and intended for very different purposes.—How much will posterity be assonished at our ignorance, and wonder that this system should have existed for so many thousand years, before we were in the least acquainted with one half of it, or had even invented names to distinguish its different members!

I have no doubt, that in future ages, the number of the comets, the form of their orbits, and time of their revolutions, will be as clearly demonstrated as that of the planets. It is our countryman, Dr. Halley, who has begun this great work, which may be considered just now as in its earliest infancy.

These bodies too, with thick atmospheres, but without tails, will likewise have their proper places ascertained, and no longer be consounded with bodies to which they bear no resemblance or connection.

Comets with tails have feldom been visible, but on their recess from the sun. It is he that kindles them up, and gives them that alarming appearance in the heavens.—On the contrary, those without tails have feldom, perhaps never, been observed, but on their approach to him. I don't recollect any whose return has been tolerably well ascertained. I remember, indeed, a sew years ago, a small one, that was said to have been discovered by a telescope, after it had passed the sun; but never more became visible to the naked eye. This affertion is easily made, and nobody can contradict it; but it does not at all appear probable, that it should have been so much less luminous after it had passed the sun, than before it approached him; and I will

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own to you, when I have heard that the return of these comets had escaped the eyes of the most acute aftronomers, I have been tempted to think that they did not return at all, but were absorbed in the body of the fun; which their violent motion towards him feemed to indicate. - Indeed, I have often wished that this discovery might be made, as it would in some measure account for what has as yet been looked upon as unaccountable; that the fun, not withflanding his daily waste from enlightening the universe, never appears diminished either in fize or light.—Surely this waste must be immense, and were there not in nature some hidden provision for supplying it, in the space of fix thoufand years, supposing the world to be no older, the planets must have got to a much greater distance from his body, by the vast diminution of his attraction; they must likewise have moved much slower, and consequently the length of our year must have been greatly increased. Nothing of all this seems to be the case: the diameter of the sun is the same that ever it was: he neither appears diminished, nor our distance from him increased: his light, heat, and attraction feem to be the same as ever; and the motion of the planets round him is performed in the same time; of consequence, his quantity of matter still continues the same.—How then is this vast waste supplied?—May there not be millions of bodies attracted by him, from the boundless regions of space, that are never perceived by us? Comets, on their road to him, have feveral times been accidentally discovered by telescopes that were never feen by the naked eye. Indeed, the number of black spots on the fun seem to indicate that there is always a quantity of matter there, only in a preparation to give light, but not yet refined and pure enough to throw off rays like the rest of his body. For I think we can hardly conceive, that any matter can remain

remain long on the body of the fun without becoming luminous; and so we find these spots often difappear, that is to fay, the matter of which they are composed is then perfectly melted, and has acquired the same degree of heat and light as the rest of his body.—Even in our glass-houses, and other very hot furnaces, most forts of matter very soon acquire the fame colour and appearance as the matter in fusion, and emit rays of light like it. But how much more must this be the case at the surface of the fun! when Newton computes, that even at many thousand miles distance from it, a body would acquire a degree of heat two thousand times greater than that of red hot iron. It has generally been understood, that he said the great comet really did acquire this degree of heat; but this is certainly a mistake: Sir Isaac's expression to the best of my remembrance, is, that it might have acquired it. And if we confider the very great fize of that body, and the short time of its perihelion, the thing will appear impossible: nor indeed do I think we can conceive, that a body only as large as our Earth, and the spots on the sun are often much larger, could be reduced to fusion, even on his surface, but after a very confiderable space of time.

Now as it feems to be univerfally supposed that the rays of light are really particles of matter, proceeding from the body of the sun, I think it is absolutely necessary that we should fall upon some such method of sending him back a supply of those rays, otherwise, let his stock be ever so great, it must at

last be exhausted.

FOULTS

I wish astronomers would observe whether the spots on the sun are not increased after the appearing of these comets; and whether these spots do not disappear again by degrees, like a body that is gradually melted down in a surnace. But there is another consideration too, which naturally occurs:

occurs: pray what becomes of all this vast quantity of matter after it is reduced to light?—Is it ever collected again into folid bodies? or is it for ever loft and diffipated, after it has made its journey from the fun to the object it illuminates? It is fomewhat strange, that of all that immelife quantity of matter poured down on us during the day, that pervades and fills the whole universe; the moment we are deprived of the luminous body, the whole of ir, in an inflant, feems to be annihilated:-in fhort, there are a number of difficulties attending the common received doctrine of light: nor do I think there is any point in natural philosophy the folution of which is less satisfactory. If we suppose every ray to be a ffream of particles of matter, darting from the luminous body, how can we conceive that these threams may be interlected and pierced by other fireams of the fame matter ten thouland thousand different ways, without caufing the least confusioneither to the one or the other? for in a clear night we fee diffinally any particular flar that we look at, although the rays coming from that flar to our eye is pierced for millions of miles before it reaches us, by millions of streams of the same rays, from every other fun and star in the universe. Now, suppose, in any other matter that we know of, and one would imagine there ought at least to be some fort of analogy; suppose, I say, we should only attempt to make two streams pass one another; water, for instance, or air, one of the purest, and the most fluid Substances we are acquainted with, we find it total-bus ly impossible. The two fireams will mutually in the terrupt and incommode one another, and the flrongest will ever carry off the weakest into its own direction; but if a stream of light is hit by ten thousand other fireams, moving at the rate of ten millions of miles in a minute, it is not even bent by the impression, onor in the smallest degree diverted from

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OCCUTS its course; but reaches us with the same precision and regularity, as if nothing had interfered with ittles Besides, on the supposition that light is real particles of matter moving from the fun to the earth, in the space of seven minutes, how comes it to pass, that with all this wonderful velocity, there feems to be no momentum! for it communicates motion to no body that obstructs its passage, and no body whatever is removed by the percussion. Supposing we had never heard of this discovery, and were at once to be told of a current of matter flying at the rate of ten millions of miles in a minute, and fo large as to cover one half of our globe, would we not imagine that the earth must instantly be torn to pieces by it, or carried off with the most incredible velocity? It will be objected, that the extreme minuteness of the particles of light prevents it from having any fuch effect; -but as these particles are in such quantity, and so close to each other as to cover the furface of every body that is opposed to them, and entirely to fill up that vast space betwixt the earth and the sun, this objection I should think in a great measure falls to the ground. The particles of air and of water are likewife extremely minute, and a fmall quantity of these will produce little or no effect, but increase their number, and only give them the millioneth part of the velocity that is afcribed to a ray of light, and no force whatever could be able to withfabiliances we are acquainted stand them.

Adieu.—I have unwarily run myself into the very deeps of philosophy; and find it rather dissiput to struggle out again.—I ask your pardon, and promise, if possible, for the suture, to steer quite clear of them.—I am sure, whatever this comet may be to the universe, it has been an ignis satuus to me; for it has led me strangely out of my road,

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and bewildered me amongst rocks and quickfands,

where I was like to flick fifty times.

I have forgot whether or not you are a rigid Newtonian; if you are, I believe I had better recant in time, for fear of accidents. I know this is a very tender point; and have feen many of those gentlemen, who are good Christians too, that can bear with much more temper to hear the divinity of our Saviour called in question, than that of Sir Isaac; and look on a Cartefian or a Ptolomean, as a worse species of insidel than an Atheist.

I remember, when I was at college, to have? feen an heretic to their doctrine of gravity, very fuddenly converted by being toffed in a blanket; and another, who denied the law of centripetal and centrifugal forces, foon brought to affent, from having the demonstration made upon his shoulders, by a stone whirled at the end of a string.

These are powerful arguments, and it is difficult to withstand them.—I cry you mercy.—I am without reach of you at prefent, and you are heartily welcome to wreck your vengeance on my letter, They are elecured

ture of the city. al remedy against the plague, and ferved thou from that fatal diffembet; The laint gained to much credit, in faving them from the laft plague of Medina, although it was attwo hundred miles distances that they have out of gratifude, erected a noble monument to her. . St. Agatha did as much for Carama, but that city has not been fo The other riches of this church generous to her coufil principally in fome bones of St. Peter, and a whole arm of John the Baptiff. There is likewife a jaw-bone of prodigious efficacy, and lome other bones of leffer note. It contains fome things of fmaller confequence, which, however are not altogether without their ment. The monuments of . . their LETTER

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time, fror fear of accidents. I know this is a very

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tender point; and have been many of those genileread and ted too sanificated Palermo, July 6th.

with much more union to bear theidivenity of 'our MANY of the churches here are extremely rich and magnificent. The cathedral (or, as they call it Madre Chiefa) is a venerable Gothic building, and of a large fize, it is supported within by eighty columns of Oriental granite, and divided into a great number of chaples, some of which are extremely rich, particularly that of St. Rofolia, the patroness of Palmero, who is held in greater veneration here, than all the persons of the Trinity; and, which is still much more, than even the Virgin Mary herself. The relies of the saint are preserved in a large box of filver, curiously wrought, and enriched with precious stones. They perform many miracles, and are looked upon as the greatest treafure of the city. They are esteemed a most effectual remedy against the plague, and have often preferved them from that fatal distemper. The faint gained fo much credit, in faving them from the last plague of Messina, although it was at two hundred miles distance, that they have out of gratitude, erected a noble monument to her. St. Agatha did as much for Catania, but that city has not been fo generous to her. The other riches of this church confift principally in some bones of St. Peter, and a whole arm of John the Baptist. There is likewise a jaw-bone of prodigious efficacy; and some other bones of lesser note. It contains some things of fmaller confequence, which, however are not altogether without their merit. The monuments of

their Norman kings, several of whom lie buried here, are of the finest porphiry, some of them near seven hundred years old, and yet of very tolerable workmanship. Opposite to these, there is a tabernacle of lapis lazuli. It is about sisteen seet high, and finely ornamented. Some of the presents made to St. Rosolia, are by no means contemptible. A cross of very large brilliants, from the king of Spain, is, I think, the most considerable.

The Sachrifte too is very rich: There are fome robes embroidered with Oriental pearl, that are near four hundred years old, and yet look as fresh

as if done yesterday.

The Jesuits church is equal in magnificence to anything I have seen in Italy. The genius of those fathers appears strong in all their works; one is never at a loss to find them out. They have been grossly calumniated; for they certainly had less hy-

pocrify than any other order of monks.

The Chiefa del Pallazzo is entirely encrusted over with antient mosaic; and the vaulted roof too is all of the same. But it is endless to talk of churches. Here are upwards of three hundred. That of Monreale, about five miles distant from this city, is the next in dignity in the island, after the cathedral of Palermo. It is nearly of the same size, and the whole is encrusted with mosaic, at an incredible expense. Here are likewise several porphiry and marble monuments of the first kings of Sicily. This cathedral was built by King William the Good, whose memory is still held in great veneration amongst the Sicilians.

The archbishop of Monreale is already looked upon as a saint, and indeed he deserves beatification better, I believe, than most of those in the calendar. His income is very great, of which he reserves to himself just as much as procures him clothes, and the simplest kind of food; all the rest he devotes to

Dan Carriage.

charitable,

charitable, pious, and public uses. He even seems to carry this too far, and denies himself the most common gratifications of life. Such as fleeping on: a bed; a piece of luxury he is faid never to indulge himself in, but lies every night on straw. He is, you may believe, adored by the people, who crowd in his way as he passes to receive his benediction; which they alledge is even of more fovereign efficacy than that of the pope. And indeed fo it is, for he never sees an object in distress, but he is sure to relieve him; not trufting alone to the spiritual efficacy of the bleffing, but always accompanying it with fomething folid and temporal; and perhaps this accompaniment is not esteemed the worst part of it. The town and country round Monreale are greatly indebted to his liberality; and in every corner exhibit marks of his munificence. He has just now made a present to the Cathedral of a magnificent altar; only about one half of which is finished. It is of massive filver, exquisitely wrought, representing in high relief, some of the principal stories in the Bible, and, I think, will be one of the finest in the world. But what is of much greater utility, he has at his own expence made a noble walk the whole way from this city to Monreale, which was formerly of very difficult access, as it stands near the top of a pretty high mountain. The walk is cut with a great deal of judgment on the fide of this mountain, and winds by eafy zig-zags to the top of it. It is adorned with several elegant fountains of water, and is bordered on each fide with a variety of flowering shrubs. The value ley at the foot of the mountain is rich and beauti-It appears one continued orange garden for many miles, and exhibits an elegant piece of scenery; perfuming the air at the fame time with the most delicious odours. We were so pleased with this little expedition, that notwithstanding the heat if and of the feafon, we could not keep in our carriage, but walked almost the whole of it.

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The city of Palermo for these ten days past has been wholly occupied in preparing for the great feast of St. Rosolia. And if the show is in any degree adequate to the expence and trouble it costs them, it must indeed be a very noble one. They are erecting an incredible number of arches and pyramids for the illuminations. They are of wood painted and adorned with artificial flowers. they tell us, are to be entirely covered over with finall lamps; so that when seen at a little distance, they appear like to many pyramids and arches of flame. The whole Marino, and the two great streets that divide the city, are to be illuminated in this magnificent manner. The number of pyramids and arches prepared for these illuminations, we are told, exceeds two thousand. They are erected on each fide of the street, betwixt the foot-path and the pavement, and run in two right lines exactly parallel from end to end. Each of these lines is a mile in length, which makes four miles for the whole. The four gates are the vistas to these four streets, and are to be highly decorated and illuminated. From the square in the centre of the city, the whole of this valtillumination can be seen at once; and they affure us the grandeur of it exceeds all belief. The whole of the Marino is to be dreffed out in the fame manners and for these three weeks past, they have been employed in creeting two great theatres for fireworks. One of these fronts the viceroy's palace, and is almost equal to it in fize. The other is raised on piles driven in the sea, exactly opposite to the great orchestra in the centre of the Marino. Besides these are building an enormous engine, which they call St. Rofolia's triumphal car. From the fize of it, one would imagine it were for ever to remain in the fpot where it is erected; but they affure us, it is to be drawn in triumph through the city. It is indeed mounted upon wheels, but it does not appear

appear that any force whatever can be able to turn them.

I own my curiofity increases every day to see this fingular exhibition. The car is already higher than most houses in Palermo, and they are still adding to its height. But the part of the thew they value themselves the most on, is the illumination of the great church: this they affirm is superior to any thing in the world; the illumination of St. Peter's itself not excepted. The preparations for it, are indeed amazing. These were begun about a month ago, and will not be finished till towards the last days of the feast. - The whole of the cathedral, both roof and walls, is entirely covered over with mirrour, intermixed with gold and filver paper, and an infinite variety of artificial flowers. All these are arranged and disposed, in my opinion, with great taste and elegance; none of them predominate, but they are intermingled every where in a just proportion.

Every altar, chapel, and column, are finished in the same manner, which takes off from the littleness of the particular ornaments, and gives an air of grandeur and uniformity to the whole. The roof is hung with innumerable lustres filled with wax candles, and I am persuaded, when the whole is lighted up, it must be equal to any palace in the Fairy Tales or the Arabian Nights Entertainment. Indeed, it seems pretty much in the same stile too, for all is gold, silver, and precious stones. The saints are dressed out in all their glory, and the fairy queen herself was never finer than is St. Rofolia. The people are lying yonder in crowds before her, praying with all their might. I dare say, for one petition offered to God Almighty, she

has at least an hundred.

We were just now remarking, with how little respect they pass the chapels dedicated to God; they they hardly deign to give a little inclination of the head; but when they come near those of their favourite faints, they bow down to the very ground: ignorance and superstition have ever been inseparable: I believe in their hearts they think he has already reigned long enough; and would be glad to have a change in the government; and every one of them (like the poor Welchman who thought he should be succeeded by Sir Watkin Williams) is fully persuaded, that his own favourite saint is the true heir apparent. Indeed they already give them the precedency on most occasions; not in processions and affairs of etiquette; there they think it would not be decent; but, in their own private affairs, they generally pay the compliment to the faint! Yet in their infcriptions on churches and chapels, (which one would think are publie enough) when they are dedicated to God and any particular faint, they have often ventured to put the name of the faint first. Sancto Januario, et Deo Opt. Max. taking every opportunity of railing their dignity, though at the expence of that of God hemfelfog olgo II

the is the herome. It is in the Sicilian lan: guage, and is indeed one of the greatest curiosiries I have met with. The poet fets her at once above all other faints, except the Virgin, and it frems to he with the greatest reluctance, that he can prevail upon himielf to yield the balm even to her. I had from this curious composition; and the notes upon it, iber St. Rotolia was niece to King William the Good. That the began very early to stoler winners of her fancting. That at forces fire obtained the world and disclarated allthus man fociery. I Shere tredito the mountains on the well of this city; and was never more heard of for about five handred years. She disposared in the vear 1159. The neople thought the had been taken

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erhe, noor M elchman, who reought HAVE been enquiring who this same St. Rosolia may be, who has become so very capital a personage in this part of the world; but notwithstanding their adoring her with fuch fervency, I have found none that can give any tolerable account of her faintship. They refer you to the most fabulous legends, that even differ widely in their accounts of her. And, after all the offerings they have made, the churches they have built, and monuments they have raised to her memory, I think it is far from being improbable, that there really never did exist such a person. I went through all the bookfellers shops, but could find nothing relative to her, except an epic poem, of which the is the heroine. It is in the Sicilian language; and is indeed one of the greatest curiofities I have met with. The poet fets her at once above all other faints, except the Virgin, and it feems to be with the greatest reluctance, that he can prevail upon himself to yield the palm even to her. I find, from this curious composition, and the notes upon it, that St. Rosolia was niece to King William the Good. That she began very early to display symptoms of her fanctity. That at fifteen she deserted the world and disclaimed all human fociety. She retired to the mountains on the west of this city; and was never more heard of for about five hundred years. She disappeared in the year 1159. The people thought she had been taken

up to heaven; till in the year 1624, during the time of a dreadful plague, a holy man had a vision, that the faint's bones were lying in a cave near the top of the Monte Pelegrino. That if they were taken up with due reverence, and carried in procession thrice round the walls of the city, they should immediately be delivered from the plague. At first little attention was paid to the holy man, and he was looked upon as little better than a dreamer; bowever, he perfitted in his flory, A) grew noify, and got adherents. The magiffrates. to pacify them, fent to the Monte Pelegrino, when lo the mighty discovery was made! the sacred bones were found, the city was freed from the plague, and St. Roolia became the greatest saint in the calendar. Churches were reared, altars were dedicated, and ministers appointed to this new divinity, whose dignity and consequence had ever since been supported at an incredible expence. Now I think it is more than probable that thefe bones, that are now fo much reverenced, and about which this great city is at prefent in fuch a builtle, belong to some poor wretch that perhaps was murdered, or died for want in the mountains. The holy man probably could have given a very good account of them. is but too age in

It is really associating to think, what animals superstition makes of mankind. I dare say, the bones of St. Rosolia are just as little intitled to the honours they receive, as those of poor St. Viar, which were sound somewhere in Spain under a broken tomb-slone, where they were the only legible letters. The story, I think, is told by Dr. Middleton. The priests sound that the bones had an excellent knack at working miracles, and were of opinion that this, together with the St. Viar, on the stone, was proof sufficent of his fanctity. He continued long in high estimation; and they drew no incon-

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fiderable revenue from his abilities; till unfortunated by they petitioned the pope to grant him some immunities. The pope (Leo the tenth, I think,) not entirely satisfied with regard to his saintship, defired to be informed of his pretensions. A list of his miracles was sent over, accompanied by the stone with St. Viar upon it. The first part of the proof was sustained; but the antiquaries discovered the fragment to be part of the tomb-stone of a (Roman) prafectus wigarum, or overseer of the high roads; to whose bones they had been so much indebted: and poor St. Viar, though probably an honester man than most of them, was ordered to

be struck out of the calendar.

The people of fashion here hold the supersition of the vulgar in great contempt; and perhaps that very superstition is one principal cause of their infidelity. Indeed I have ever found, that deilm is most prevalent in those countries where the people are the wildest and most bigotted.—A refined and cultivated understanding, shocked at their folly, thinks it cannot possibly recede too far from it, and is often tempted to fly to the very opposite extreme.—When reason is much softened by any particular dogma of faith or act of worship, she is but too apt in the midst of her disgust, to reject the whole. The great misfortune is, that in these countries, the most violent champions for religion are commonly the most weak and ignorant: And certainly one weak advocate in any cause, but more particularly in a mysterious one, that requires to be handled with delicacy and address, is capable of hurting it more, than fifty of its warmest opponents.—Silly books, that have been written by weak well-meaning men in defence of religion, I am confident have made more infidels than all the works of Bolingbroke, Shaftelbury, or even Voltaire himself: they only want to make people believe hderahlese)

believe that there are some ludicrous things to be faid against it; but these grave plodding blockheads do all they can to perfuade us there is little or nothing to be said for it.—The universal error of these gentry, is that they ever attempt to explain, and reconcile to fense and reason those very mysteries that the first principles of our religion teach us are incomprehenfible; and of confequence neither objects of fense or reason. I once heard an ignorant priest declare, that he did not find the least difficulty, in conceiving the mystery of the Trinity, or that of incarnation; and that he would undertake to make them plain to the meanest capacities. A gentleman present told him, he had no doubt he could, to all fuch capacities as his own. The priest took it as a compliment, and made him a bow.-Now, don't you think, that a few such teachers as this, must hurt religion more by their zeal, than all their opponents can by their wit? Had these heroes still kept behind the bulwarks of faith and of mystery, their adversaries never could have touched them; but they have been foolish enough to abandon these strong holds, and dared them forth to combat on the plain fields of reason and of fense.—A sad piece of generalship indeed! fuch defenders must ever ruin the best cause.

But although the people of education here defpife the wild superstition of the vulgar, yet they go regularly to mass, and attend the ordinances with great respect and decency; and they are much pleased with us for our conformity to their customs, and for not appearing openly to despise their rites and ceremonies. I own, this attention of theirs, not to offend weak minds, tends much to give us a favourable opinion both of their hearts and understandings, They don't make any boast of their insidelity; neither do they pester you with it as in France, where it is perpetually buzzed in your

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ears; and where, although they pretend to believe less, they do in fact believe more than any nation on the continent.

I know of nothing that gives one a worfe opinion of a man, than to fee him make a shew and parade of his contempt for things held facred: it is an open infult to the judgment of the public.—A countryman of ours, about two years ago, offended egregiously in this article, and the people still speak of him both with contempt and detestation. It happened one day, in the great church, during the elevation of the hoft, when every body else were on their knees, that he still kept standing, without any appearance of respect to the ceremony. A young nobleman that was near to him expressed his surprise at this.—" It is strange, Sir, " (faid he) that you, who have had the education " of a gentleman, and ought to have the fenti-" ments of one, should choose thus to give so very " public offence."-Why, Sir, (faid the English-" man) I do not believe in Transubstantiation." "Neither do I, Sir, (replied the other) and " yet you fee I kneel."

Adieu. I am called away to see the preparations for the seast. In my next I shall probably give

you some account of it.

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P.S. I have been watching with great care the return of our comet, but as yet I have discovered nothing of it:—I observe too with a very indifferent glass, several large round spots on the sun's disk, and am far from being certain that it is not one of them:—But I shall not alarm you any more with this subject.

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and foon after tof 112; auch auc coindentiothat N Sunday the 8th, we had the long expeded firecce wind, which although our expectations had been raised pretty high, yet I own it greatly exceeded them. Ever fince we came to our new lodging, the thermometer has stood betwixt 72 and 74; at our old one, it was often at 79 and 80; To great is the difference betwixt the heart of the city and the feathore. At prefent, our windows not only front to the north, but the fea is immediately under them, from whence we are constantly refreshed by a delightful cooling breeze. Friday and Saturday were uncommonly cool, the mercury never being higher than 721; and although the firocco is faid to have fet in early on Sunday morning, the air in our apartments, which are very large, with high ceilings, was not in the least affected by it at eight o'clock, when I role. I opened the door without having any fuspicion of such a change; and indeed I never was more aftonished in my life. The first blast of it on my face felt Tike the barning steam from the mouth of an oven. drew back my head and thut the door, calling bout to Fullerton, that the whole atmosphere was vima flame. However, we ventured to open anowther door that leads to a cool platform, where we usually walk; this was not exposed to the wind; nediand

TOUR THROUGH and here I found the heat much more supportable than I could have expected from the first specimen I had of it at the other door. It felt somewhat like the fubterraneous fweating stoves at Naples; but still much hotter. In a few minutes we found every fibre greatly relaxed, and the pores opened to fuch a degree, that we expected foon to be thrown into a profuse sweat. I went to examine the thermometer, and found the air in the room as yet so little affected, that it stood only at 73. The preceding night it was at 72½. I took it out to the open air, when it immediately role to 110, and foon after to 112; and I am confident, that in our old lodgings, or any where within the city it must have risen several degrees higher. The air was thick and heavy, but the barometer was little affected; it had fallen only about a line. The fun did not once appear the whole day, otherwise I and perfuaded the heat must have been insupportable; on that fide of our platform which is exposed to the wind, it was with difficulty we could bear it for a few minutes. Here I exposed a little pomatum, which was melted down, as if I had laid it before the fire. Lattempted to take a walk in the fireer, to fee if any creature was firring, but I found it too much for me, and was glad to firecco is faid to have let in caning a gain a broom

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This extraordinary heat continued till 3 o'clock in the afternoon, when the wind changed at once, almost to the opposite point of the compass, and all the rest of the day it blew strong from the sea. It is impossible to conceive the different seeling of the air. Indeed, the sudden change from heat to cold is almost as inconceivable as that from cold to heat. The current of this hot air had been slying for many hours from South to North; and I had no doubt, that the atmosphere for many miles round was entirely composed of it; however the wind no sooner changed to the North,

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than it felt extremely cold; and we were foon obliged to put on our clothes, for till then we had been almost naked. In a short time the thermometer funk to 82, a degree of heat that in England would be thought almost insupportable, and yet all that night we were obliged, merely from the cold, to keep up the glaffes of our coach; fo much were the pores opened and the fibres relaxed by thefe few hours of the firoceo. Indeed I had exposed myself a good deal to the open air, as I was determined to feel what effect it would produce on the human body. At first I thought it must have been impossible to bear it; but I soon discovered my mistake, and found, that where I was sheltered from the wind, I could walk about without any great inconveniency; neither did it produce that copious fweat I expected; it occafloned indeed a violent perspiration, which was only attended with a flight moisture on the skin; but I suppose, if I had put on my clothes, or taken the least exercise, it soon would have brought

I own to you my curiofity with regard to the firocco is now thoroughly fatisfied; nor do I at all wish for another visit of it during our stay in Sicily. Many of our acquaintance who had been promifing us this regalo, as they call it, came crowding about us as foon as it was over, to know what we thought of it. They own it has been pretty. violent for the time it lasted; but assure us they have felt it more fo, and likewise of a much longer duration; however, it feldom lasts more than thirty-fix or forty hours, fo that the walls of the houses have not time to be heated throughout, otherwise they think there could be no such thing as living: however, from what I felt of it, I believe they are mistaken. Indeed, had I been fatisfied with the first blast, (which is generally the

case with them, and never more ventured out in it, I certainly should have been of their opinion. They laughed at us for exposing ourselves so long to it; and were furprised that our curiosity should lead us to make experiments at the expence of our persons. They affure us, that during the time it lasts, there is not a mortal to be seen without doors, but those whom necessity obliges. All their doors and windows are shut close, to prevent the external air from entering; and where there are no window-shutters, they hang up wet blankets on the The fervants are constantinfide of the windows. ly employed in sprinkling water through their apartments, to preserve the air in as temperate a state as possible; and this is no difficult matter here, as I am told there is not a house in the city that has not a fountain within it. By these means the people of fashion suffer very little from the firocco, except the strict confinement to which it obliges them,

It was somewhat fingular, that notwithstanding the scorching heat of this wind, it has never been known to produce any epidemical distempers, nor indeed bad consequences of any kind to the health of the people. It is true, they feel extremely weak and relaxed during the time it blows, but a few hours of the Tramontane, or north wind, which generally fucceeds it foon braces them up, and fets them to rights again. Now, in Naples, and in many other places in Italy, where its violence is not to be compared to this, it is often attended with putrid disorders, and seldom fails to produce almost a general dejection of spirits. It is true, indeed, that there the firocco lasts for many days, nay, even for weeks; fo that, as its effects are different, it probably proceeds likewise from a

different cause.

I have not been able to procure any good account of this very fingular object in the climate

of Palermon The causes they assign for it are various, though none of them, I think, altoge-

ther fatisfactory.

I have seen an old fellow here, who has written upon it. He says it is the same wind that is to dreadful in the fandy deferts of Africa, where it sometimes proves mortal in the space of half an hour. He alledges that it is cooled by its passage over the sea, which entirely disarms at of these tremendous effects, before it reaches Sicily. But if this were true, we should expect to find it most violent on that fide of the island that lies nearest to Africa, which is not the case:-though indeed it is possible that its heat may be again increased by its passage across the island; for it has ever been found much more violent at Palermo, which is nearer the most northern point than anywhere else in Sicily.-Indeed, I begin to be more reconciled to this reason, when I consider that this city is almost furrounded by high mountains, the ravines and vallies betwixt which are parched up and burning-hot at this feason. These likewise contain innumerable fprings of warm water, the steams of which must tend greatly to increase the heat, and perhaps likewise to soften the air, and difarm it of its noxious qualities. It is a practice too, at this feafon, to burn heath and brush-wood on the mountains, which must still add to the heat of the air.

Some gentlemen who were in the country told me, they had walked out immediately after the firocco, and found the grass and plants, that had been green the day before, were become quite brown, and crackled under their feet as if dried in

an oven.

I shall add for your amusement, a journal of the weather since we came to Palermo. The barometer has continued constantly within a line or two of the same point, 29½; and the sky has been always

always cleans except the day of the firocco, and
the 26th of June, when we had a pretty fmart shower of rain for two hours; so that I think I
have nothing farther to do. but to mark the
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The more I consider the extreme violence of this heat, the more I am surprised that we were able to bear it with so little inconvenience. We did

did not even feel that depression of spirits that commonly attends very great heats with us.—The thermometer rose 40 degrees, or very near it; and it happened singularly enough, that before the sirocco began, it stood just about 40 degrees above the point of congelation; so that in the morning of the 8th of July, the heat increased as much, almost instantaneously, as it generally does during the whole time that the sun moves from tropic to tropic; for the difference of 72 and 112 is the same as between the freezing point and 72; or between a cold day in winter, and a warm one in

fummer.

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Yesterday we had a great entertainment in the palace of the Prince Partana, from the balcony of which the viceroy reviewed a regiment of Swifs, the best I have yet seen in the Neapolitan service. They are really a fine body of men, and, notwithstanding the violence of the heat, went through their motions with great spirit. They had two field pieces on each flank, which were extremely well ferved; and the evolutions were performed with more precision and steadiness than one generally meets with, except in England or Germany. The grenadiers were furnished with false grenades, which produced every effect of real ones, except that of doing mischief. The throwing of these was the part of the entertainment that seemed to please the most; and the grenadiers took care to direct them fo, that their effect should not be lost. When a number of them fell together amongst a thick crowd of the nobility, which was commonly the case, it afforded an entertaining scene enough, for they defended themselves with their hats, and threw them very dexteriously upon their neighbours. However, we faw no damage done except the fingeing of a few wigs and caps; for the ladies were there in as great numbers as the genflemen.

The company at the prince Partana's was brilliant, and the entertainment noble. It confifted principally of ices, creams, chocolate, fweetmeats, and fruit, of which there was a great variety. Not one half of the company played at cards; the reft amused themselves in conversation and walking on the terrace. We found the young prince and princess, who are very amiable, with several of their companions playing at cross purposes, and other games of that kind. We were joyfully admitted of this chearful little circle, where we amused ourselves very well for several hours.--I only mention this, to shew you the different system of behaviour here and in Italy, where no fuch familiar intercourse is allowed amongst young people before marriage. The young ladies here are easy, affable, and unaffected; and, not (as on the continent) perpetually fluck up by the fides of their mothers, who bring them into company, not for their amusement, but rather to offer them to fale; and feem mightily afraid lest every one should steal them, or that they themselves should make an elopement, which indeed I should think there was some danger of, considering the restraint under which they are kept:--for furely there is no fuch strong incitement to vice, as the making a punishment of virtue.

Here the mothers shew a proper considence in their daughters, and allow their real characters to form and to ripen. In the other case they have either no character at all, or an affected one, which they take care to throw off the moment they have got a husband; when they think it impossible to recede too far from those rigorous maxims of decorum and circumspection, the practice of which they had ever found fo extremely difagreeable. and to sturk on the same allow it in manual suf-

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LETTER

Were they allowed first to shew what they really are, I am persuaded they would not be half so bad; but their parents, by the manner they treat them, shew that they have no considence in their principles, and seem to have adopted the ungenerous maxim of our countryman, that

Lucry woman is at heart a rake."

Now in countries where this maxim becomes of general belief, there is no doubt, that it likewife becomes true; for the women having no longer any character to support, they will even avoid the pretences to virtue, well knowing that those pretences are only looked upon as hypocrify and affectation. I dare say, you will agree with me, that the better method to make them virtuous, is first to make them believe that we think them so; for wherevirtue is really esteemed, there are none that would willingly relinquish the character; but where it requires a guard, (as parson Adams says) it certainly is not worth the centinel.

equisione of the families here put me in mind of our own domestic system. The prince of Resuttana, his wife and daughter, are always together: but it is because they chuse to be so, and there appears the ftrongest affection, without the least "diffidence on the one fide, or restraint on the other. The young princess Donna Rosolia is one of the most amiable young ladies I have feen; she was "of our little party last night, and indeed made one of its greatest ornaments.—It would appear vain and partial, after this to fay, that in countenance, fentiment, and behaviour, she seems altogether English; -but it is true - and this perhaps may have contributed to advance her still higher in our esteem; for in spite of all our philolophy, these unphilosophical prejudices will still exist,

exist, and no man, I believe, has entirely divested himself of them. We had larely a noble entertainment at her father's country-house, and had reason to be much pleased with the unaffected hospitality and easy politeness of the whole family. This palace is reckoned the most magnificent in the neighbourhood of Palermo. It lies about fix or feven miles to the west of the city, in the country called Il Colle; in the opposite direction from the Bagaria, which I have already mentioned. The vicerby and his family, with the greatest part of the pobility, were of this party, which lasted till about two in the morning. At midnight a curious fet of fire works were played off, from the leads of the palace, which had a fine effect from the garden below. W. DOY TYST O'BD I noise he

Farewell.—I had no time to write yesterday, and tho we did not break up till near three this morning, I have got up at eight, I was so eager to give you some account of the sirocco wind.

We are now going to be very bufy: The feast of St. Rofolia begins to morrow, and all the world are on the very tip-toe of expectation: perhaps they may be disappointed. I often wish that you were with us, particularly when we are happy: Though you know it is by no means feasts and flews that make us fo. However, as this is perhaps the most remarkable one in Europe; that you may enjoy as much of it as possible, I shall sit down every night, and give you a short account of the transactions of the days - We are now going to breakfast; after which we are engaged to play at Ballon, an exercise I suppose you are well acquainted with; but as the day promifes to be extremely hot, I believe I shall defert the party and go a swimming. But I see F. and G. have already attacked the figs and peaches, fo I must appear for my interest.—Farewell.

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HETTER

The strey and dispositioned on the wheeling to the

Palermo, July 12th.

trybeathed II (201 e) that the despented direction from A BOUT five in the afternoon, the festival began by the triumph of St. Rofolia, who was drawn with great pomp through the centre of the city, from the Marino to the Porto Nuovo. The triumph car was preceded by a troop of horse, with trumpets and kettle-drums; and all the city officers in their gala uniforms. It is indeed a most enormous machine: It measures seventy sect long, thirty wide, and upwards of eighty high; and, as it passed along over-topped the loftiest houses of Palermo. The form of its underpart is like that of the Roman gallies, but it swells as it advances in beight, and the front affumes on oval shape like an amphitheatre, with feats placed in the theatrical manner. This is the great orchestra, which was filled with a numerous band of musicians' placed in rows, one above the other. Over this orchestra, and a little behind it, there is a large dome supported by fix Corinthian columns, and adorned with a number of figures of faints and angels; and on the fummit of the dome there is a gigantic filver flatue of St. Rosolia. The whole machine is dreffed out with orange trees, flowerpots, and trees of artificial coral. The car flopped every fifty or fixty yards, when the orchestra" performed a piece of mufic, with fongs in honour of the faint. It appeared a moving castle, and completely filled the greatest street from fide to fide. This indeed was its greatest disadvantage, for the fpace

space it had to move in was in no wife proportioned to its fize, and the houses seemed to dwindle away to nothing as it passed along. This vast fabric was drawn by fifty-fix huge mules, in two rows, curiously caparisoned, and mounted by twenty-eight possiblions, dressed in gold and filver stuffs, with great plumes of offrich feathers in their hats.—Every window and balcony, on both sides of the street, were full of well-dressed people, and the car was followed by many thousands of the lower fort. The triumph was shuished in about three hours; and was succeeded by the beautiful illumination of the Marino.

I believe I have already mentioned, that there is a range of arches and pyramids extending from end to end of this noble walk: these are painted and adorned with artificial flowers, and are entirely covered with lamps, placed so very thick, that at a little distance the whole appears so many pyramids and arches of slame. The whole chain of this illumination was about a mile in length, and indeed you can hardly conceive any thing more splendid. There was no break or imperfection any where; the night being so still that not

a fingle lamp was extinguished.

Opposite to the centre of this great line of light, there was a magnificent pavilion erected for the viceroy and his company, which consisted of the whole nobility of Palermo: and on the front of this, at some little distance in the sea, stood the great fire-works, representing the front of a palace, adorned with columns, arches, trophies, and every ornament of architecture. All the chebecks, galleys, galliots, and other shipping, were ranged around this palace, and formed a kind of amphitheatre in the sea, inclosing it in the centre.

—These began the show by a discharge of the whole of their artillery, the sound of which, received

echoed from the mountains, and produced a very noble effect; they then played off a variety of water rockets, and bombs of a curious construction, that often burst below water. This continued for half an hour, when, in an inftant, the whole of the palace was beautifully illuminated. This was the figual for the shipping to chase, and appeared indeed like a piece of inchantment, as it was done altogether instantaneously, and without the appearance of any agent. At the same time the fountains that were represented in the court before the palace, began to spout up fire, and made a reprefentation of some of the great jet d'eaus of Verfailles and Marly. As foon as these were extinguished, the court assumed the form of a great parterre, adorned with a variety of palm trees of tire, interspersed with orange-trees, flower-pots, vales, and other ornaments. On the extinguish ing of these the illumination of the palace was likewife extinguished, and the front of it broke out into the appearance of a variety of funs, stars, and wheels of fire, which in a short time reduced it to a perfect ruin. And when all appeared finished, there burst from the centre of the pile, a vast explosion of two thousand rockets, bombs, ferpents, sqibbs, and devils, which seemed to fill the whole atmosphere? the fall of these made terrible havock amongst the clothes of the poor people who were not under cover, but afforded admirable entertainment to the nobility who were. During this exhibition we had a handsome entertainment of coffee, ices, and fweetmeats, with a variety of excellent wines, in the great pavilion in the centre of the Marino; this was at the expence of the Duke of Castellano, the prætor (or mayor) of the city. The principal nobility give these entertainments by turns every night during the festival, and vie with each other in their magnificence.

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As foon as the fireworks were finished, the vice. roy went out to sea in a galley richly illuminated. We chose to stay on shore, to see the appearance it made at a distance. It was rowed by seventy-two oars, and indeed made one of the most beautiful objects, you can imagine; flying with vast velocity over the waters, as smooth and as clear as glass, which shone round it like a slame, and resected its splendour on all sides. The oars beat time to the French-horns, clarionets, and trumpets, of which there was a numerous band on the prow.

The day's entertainment was concluded by the Corfo, which began exactly at midnight, and lafted

till two in the morning.

I two in the morning. The great street was illuminated in the same consistent manner as the Marino. The arches magnificent manner as the Marino. and pyramids were erected at little distances from each other, on both fides of the street, betwixt the foot path and the space for carriages; and when feen from either of the gates, appeared to be two continued lines of the brightest flame. Indeed, these illuminations are so very different, and so much superior to any I have ever seen, that I find it difficult to give any tolerable, idea of them, Two lines of coaches occupied the space betwixt those two lines of illumination, They were in their greatest gala; and as they open from the middle, and let down on each fide, the beauty of the ladies, the richness of their dress, and brilliance of their jewels, were displayed in the most advantageous man her.

This beautiful train moved flowly round and round for the space of two hours; and every member of it seemed animated with a desire to pleafe. The company appeared all joy and exultation:—Scarce two coaches passed without some mutual acknowledgement of affection or respect; and the pleasure that sparkled from every eye

feemed to be reflected and communicated by a kind

of fympathy through the whole.

In such an assembly, it was impossible for the heart not to dilate and expand itself;—I own mine was often so full, that I could hardly find utterance; and I have seen a tragedy with less emotion than I did this scene of joy.—I always thought these affections had been strangers to pomp and parade; but here the universal joy seemed really to spring from the heart: it brightened up every countenance, and spoke affection and friendship from every face.—No stately air,—no supercitious look;—all appeared friends and equals—And sure I am, that the beauty of the ladies was not half so much heightened either by their dress or their jewels, as by that air of complacency and good humour with which it was animated.

We were distributed in different coaches amongst the nobility, which gave us a better opportunity of making these observations.—I will own to you, that I have never beheld a more delightful fight;—and if superstition often produces such effects, I sincerely wish we had a little more of it amongst us. I could have thrown myself down before St. Rosolia, and blessed her for making so

many people happy.

We retired about two o'clock; but the variety of glittering scenes and gaudy objects still vibrated before my eyes, and prevented me from sleeping; however, I am almost as much refreshed as it I had, but I really believe four more such days will be too much for any of us. Indeed, I am sure that it is impossible to keep it up, and it must necessarily slag. I think, from what I can observe, they have already exhausted almost one half of their preparations; how they are to support the other sour days, I own, I do not comprehend;—however, we shall see.

I thought

I thought to have given you an account of every thing at night, after it was over, but I find it impossible: the spirits are too much dissipated, and exhausted; and the imagination is too full of objects to be able to separate them with any degree of regularity.—I shall write you therefore regularly the morning following, when this sever of the sancy has had time to cool, and when things appear as they really are.—Adieu then till to-morrow.—Here is a fine shower, which will cool the air, and save the trouble of watering the Marino and the great street, which is done regularly every morning when there is no rain. The thermome-

ter is at 73.

13th. I thought there would be a falling off.— Yesterday's entertainments were not so splendid as those of the day before. They began by the horseraces. There were three races, and fix horses started each race. These were mounted by boys of about twelve years old, without either faddle. or bridle, but only a fmall piece of cord, by way of bit, in the horse's mouth, which it seems is sufficient to stop them. The great street was the course; and to this end it was covered with earth to the depth of five or fix inches. firing of a cannon at the Porto Felice was the fignal for flarting: and the horses seemed to understand this, for they all set off at once, full speed. and continued at their utmost firetch to the Porto Nuovo, which was the winning post. It is exally a mile, and they performed it in a minute and thirty-five feconds, which, confidering the fize of the horses, (scarce fourteen hands) we thought was very great. These are generally Barbs, or a mixed breed, betwixt the Sicilian and Barb. The boys were gaudily dreffed, and made a pretty appearance.—We were furprifed to fee how well they fluck on; but indeed I observed they had generally laid fast hold of the mane.

The moment before flarting, the ffreet appeared full of people; nor did we conceive how the race could possibly be performed. Our furprise was increased when we saw the horses run full speed at the very thickest of this croud, which did not begin to open, till they were almost close upon it. The people then opened, and fell back on each fide, by a regular uniform motion, from one fide of the street to the other. This fingular manœuvre feemed to be performed without any buftle or confusion, and the moment the horses were past they closed again behind them. However it destroys great part of the pleasure of the race; for you cannot help being under apprehensions for such a number of people, whom you every moment fee in imminent danger of being trod to death; for this must inevitably be their fate, were they only a se-cond or two later in retiring. These accidents, they allow, have often happened; however, yesterday every body escaped.

The victor was conducted along the street in triumph, with his prize displayed before him.—
This was a piece of white filk embroidered and

worked with gold.

These races I think are much superior to the common stile of races in Italy, which are performed by horses alone without riders; but they are by no means to be compared to those in England.

The great sfreet was illuminated in the same manner as on the preceding night; and the grand conversation of the nobles was held at the archbishop's palace, which was richly sitted up for

the occasion.

The gardens were finely illuminated, and, put me in mind of our Vauxhall. There were two orchestras (one at each end) and two very good bands bands of music. The entertainment was splendid, and the archbishop shewed attention and polite-

ness to every person of the company.

About ten o'clock the great triumphal car marched back again in procession to the Marino. It was richly illuminated with large wax tapers, and made a most formidable figure.—Don Quixote would have been very excusable in taking it for an inchanted castle, moving thro' the air.—We did not leave the archbishop's till midnight, when the Corso began, which was precisely the same in every respect as the night before, and afforded

us a delightful fcene.

the four gates of the city that terminate them, were illuminated in the most splendid manner.—These streets cross each other in the centre of the city, where they form a beautiful square called La Piazza Otangolare, from the eight angles they form. This square was richly ornamented with tapestry, statues, and artificial flowers; and as the buildings which form its four sides are uniform, and of a beautiful architecture, and at the same time highly illuminated, it made a fine appearance. There are four orchestras erected in it; and the four bands of music are greater than I had any conception this city could have produced.

From the centre of this square you have a view of the whole city of Palermo, thus dressed out in its glory;—and indeed the effect it produces surpasses belief.—The four gates that form the vistas in this splendid scene are highly decorated, and lighted up in an elegant taste; the illuminations representing a variety of trophies, the arms of Spain, those of Naples, Sicily, and the city of

Palermo, with their guardian geniuses, &c.

The conversation of the nobles was held in the viceroy's palace; and the entertainment was still more magnificent than any of the former.

The

The great fire-works opposite the front of the palace began at ten o'clock, and ended at midnight; after which we went to the Corfo, which lasted, as usual, till two in the morning. This part of the entertainment still pleases us the most; it is indeed the only part of it that reaches the heart; and where this is not the case, a puppet show is just as good as a coronation. We have now got acquainted almost with every countenance; and from that air of goodness and benignity that animates them, and which feems to be mutually reflected from one to the other, we are inclined to form the most favourable opinion of the people.

Our fire-works last night were greater 'than those of the Marino, but their effect did not please me fo much; the want of the fea and the shipping were two capital wants. They likewife represented the front of a palace, but of a greater extent. It was illuminated too as the former, and the whole conducted pretty much in the fame manner, We faw it to the greatest advantage from the balconies of the flate apartments, in the viceroy's palace, where we had an elegant concert; but to the no small disappointment of the company, Gabrieli, the finest finger but the most capricious mortal upon earth, did not choose to perform.

15th. Three-races, fix horses each, as formerly. They called it very good sport. I cannot say that I admired it. A poor creature was rode down, and I believe killed; and one of the boys

had likewise a fall.

The great affembly of the nobility was held at the Justice Monarchia's, an officer of high trust and dignity—Here we had an entertainment in the fame stile as the others, and a good concert. At eleven o'clock the viceroy, attended by the whole company, went on foot to visit the fquare and the great church. We made a prodigious prodigious train; for though the city was all a lamp of light, the servants of the viceroy and nobility attended with wax flambeaux, to shew us the way. As soon as the viceroy entered the square, the sour orchestras struck up a symphony,

and continued playing till he left it.

The croud around the church was very great, and without the presence of the viceroy, it would have been impossible for us to get in:-but his. attendants foon cleared the passages; and at once entering the great gate, we beheld the most splendid scene in the world. The whole church appeared a flame of light; which, reflected from ten thousand bright and shining surfaces, of different colours, and at different angles, produced an effect, which, I think, exceeds all the descriptions of enchantment I have ever read.—Indeed, I did not think that human art could have devised any thing fo splendid. I believe I have already mentioned that the whole church, walls, roofs, pillars, and pilasters were entirely covered over with mirror, interspersed with gold and filver paper, artificial flowers, &c. done up with great tafte and elegance, fo that not one inch either of stone or plaister was to be seen.-Now, form an idea, if you can, of one of our great cathedrals dreffed out in this manner, and illuminated with twenty thousand wax tapers, and you will have fome faint notion of this splendid scene. I own it did greatly exceed my expectations, although, from the descriptions we had of it, they were raifed very high.—When we recovered from our first surprise, which had produced, unknown to ourselves many exclamations of astonishment, I observed that all the eyes of the nobility were fixed upon us; and that they enjoyed exceedingly the amazement into which we were thrown.-Indeed this scene, in my opinion, greatly exceeds all the rest of the show. I have

I have often heard the illumination of St. Peter's fpoken of as a wonderful fine thing; fo indeed it is; but it is certainly no more to be compared to this, than the planet Venus is to the fun.-The effects indeed are of a different kind, and cannot

well be compared together.

This fcene was too glaring to bear any confiderable time; and the heat occasioned by the immense number of lights, soon became intolerable. I attempted to reckon the number of lustres, and counted upward of five hundred; but my head became giddy, and I was obliged to give it up. They assure us that the number of wax tapers is not less than twenty thousand. There are eight-and-twenty altars, fourteen on each fide; these are dressed out with the utmost magnificence; and the great altar is still the most splendid of all.

When you think of the gaudy materials that compose the lining of this church, it will be difficult to annex an idea of grandeur and majesty to it: at least, so it struck me, when I was first told of it; yet, I affure you, the elegant fimplicity and unity of the defign prevents this effect, and

gives an air of dignity to the whole.

It is on this part of the show the people of Palermo value themselves the most; they talk of all the rest as triffing in comparison of this; and indeed, I think it is probable, that there is nothing of the kind in the world that is equal to it. It is firange they should choose to be at so great an expence and trouble, for a flew of a few hours only; for they have already begun this morning to strip the church of its gaudy dress; and I am told it will not be finished for many weeks.

From the church we went immediately to the Corfo which concluded; as usual, the entertain-

ments of the day.

16th. Last night we had the full illumination of all the streets. The affembly was held at the prætor's, where there was an elegant entertainment and a concert. Pacherotti, the first man of the opera, distinguished himself very much. I think he is one of the most agreeable fingers I have ever heard; and am perfuaded, that in a few years he will be very celebrated. Campanucci, the second soprano, is, I think, preferable to most I have heard in Italy; and you will the more eafily believe this, when I inform you, that he is engaged for next winter, to be the first finger in the great opera at Rome.—Is it not strange, that the capital of all Italy; and, for the fine arts, (as it formerly was for arms) the capital of the world, should condescend to choose its first opera-performer from amongst the subtalterns of a remote Sicilian stage?

You will believe that with two fuch fopranos as these, and Gabrieli for the first woman, the opera-here will not be a despicable one. It is to begin in a few days, notwithstanding the extreme heat of the season; so fond are the people here of

these entertainments.

Their opera dancers are those you had last year at London; they are just arrived, and the people are by no means pleased with them. We saw them this morning at the rehearfal; and to their great surprise, addressed them in English. You cannot imagine how happy they were to see us. Poor souls! I was delighted to hear with what warmth of gratitude and affection they spoke of England. There is a mother and two daughters; the youngest pretty, but the eldest, the first dancer, appears a sensible, modest, well-behaved girl: more so than is common with these sort of people. Speaking of England, she said, with a degree of warmth, that her good treatment in general could hardly

hardly inspire, that in her life she never lest any country with so fore a heart; and had she only enjoyed her health, all the world should never have torn her away from it. She seemed affected when she said this. I acknowledged the honour she did the English nation; but alledged that these sentiments, and the manner in which they were uttered, could scarcely proceed from a general love of the country.—She answered me with a smile, but at the same time I could observe the tear in her eye.—At that instant we were interrupted; however, I shall endeavour, if possible, to learn her story; for I am persuaded there is one; perhaps you may know it, as I dare say it is no secret in London.

But I have got quite away from my subject, and had forgot that I sat down to give you an account of the feast. Indeed, I will own, it is a kind of subject I by no means like to write upon; I almost repent that I had undertaken it, and I am heartily glad it is now over. It does very well to see shows; but their description is of all things on earth the most insipid: for words and writing convey ideas only by a flow and regular kind of progress; and while we gain one, generally lose another, so that the fancy seldom embraces the whole; but when a thousand objects strike you at once, the imagination is filled and satisfied.

The great procession that closes the festival began at ten o'clock. It only differed from other processions in this, that besides all the priests, friars, and religious orders of the city, there were placed at equal distances from each other ten losty machines made of wood and pasteboard, ornamented in an elegant manner, representing temples, tabernacles, and a variety of beautiful pieces of architecture. These are furnished by the different convents and religious fraternities, who vie with each

other in the richness and elegance of the work. Some of them are not less than fixty seet high. They are filled with figures of saints and of angels, made of wax, so natural and so admirably well painted, that many of them seemed really to be alive. All these figures are prepared by the nuns, and by them dressed out in rich robes of

gold and filver tiffue.

We were a good deal amused this morning to see them returning home in coaches to their respective nunneries. At first we took them for ladies in the gala drefs, going out to visit the churches, which we were told was the custom, and began to pull off our hats as they went past. Indeed, we were led into this blunder by some of our friends, who carried us out on purpose; and as they saw the coaches approach, told us, this is Princels of fuch a thing,—there is the Dutchess of such another thing;—and, in short, we had made half a dozen of our best bows (to the no small entertainment of these wags) before we discovered the trick. They now infift upon it, that we are good Catholics, for all this morning we have been bowing to faints and angels.

A great filver box, containing the bones of St. Rosolia, closed the procession. It was carried by thirty-fix of the most respectable burgesses of the city, who look upon this as the greatest honour. The archbishop walked behind it, giving his be-

nediction to the people as he passed.

No fooner had the procession finished the tour of the great square, before the prætor's palace, than the fountain in the centre, one of the largest and finest in Europe, was converted into a sountain of fire; throwing it up on all sides, and making a beautiful appearance. It only lasted for a sew minutes, and was extinguished by a vast explosion, which concluded the whole. As this was altogether

altogether unexpected, it produced a fine effect, and furprifed the spectators more than any of the

great fireworks had done.

There was a mutual and friendly congratulation ran thro' the whole affembly, which foon after parted; and this morning every thing has once more reassumed its natural form and order;—and I assure you, we were not more happy at the opening of the festival, than we are now at its conclusion. Every body was fatigued and exhausted by the perpetual feasting, watching, and dissipation of these five days.—However, upon the whole, we have been much delighted with it, and may with truth pronounce,—that the entertainments of the feast of St. Rosolia are much beyond those of the Holy Week at Rome; of the Ascension, at Venice; or indeed, any other sessions we have ever been witness of.

I believe I did not tell you, that about ten or twelve days ago, as the time we had appointed for our return to Naples was elapsed, we had hired a small vessel, and provided every thing for our departure: we had even taken leave of the viceroy, and received our passports. Our baggage and sea-store was already on board, when we were set upon by our friends, and solicited with so much earnestness and cordiality, to give them another fortnight, that we sound it impossible to resuse it; and in consequence discharged our vessel, and sent for our trunks—I should not have mentioned this, were it not to shew you how much more attention is paid to strangers here than in most places on the continent.

We reckon ourselves much indebted to them for having obliged us to prolong our stay; as, independent of the amusements of the sestival, we have met with so much hospitality and urbanity, that it is now with with the most fincere regret we find ourselves obliged to leave them. Indeed, had we brought our clothes and books from Naples, it is hard to say how long we might have sayed.

We have fent to engage a vessel, but probably

shall not fail for five or fix days. Adieu.

L E T T E R XXXI.

Palermo, July 19th.

WE have now had time to enquire a little into fome of the antiquities of this island, and have found several people, particularly the prince of Torremuzzo, who have made this the great object of their study. However, I find we must wade through oceans of siction, before we can arrive at

any thing certain or fatisfactory.

Most of the Sicilian authors agree in deriving their origin from Ham, or as they call him Cham, the son of Noah, who, they pretend, is the same with Saturn. They tell you that he built a great city, which from him was named Camesena.—

There have been violent disputes about the situation of this city:—Beroso supposes it to have stood, where Camarina was afterwards founded, and this was only a corruption of its primitive name. But Guarneri, Carrera, and others, combat this opinion, and affirm that Camesena stood near the foot of Etna, between Aci and Catania almost opposite

to these three rocks that still bear the name of the Cyclops.—Indeed Carera mentions an inscription that he had seen in a ruin near Aci, supposed to have been the sepulciare of Acis, which he thinks puts this matter out of doubt. These are his words: "Hæc est inscriptio vetustæ cujusdam tabellæ repertæ in pyramide sepulchri Acis, ex fragmentis, vetustissimæ Chamesenæ, urbis hodie Acis, conditæ a Cham, gigantum principe, etiam nuncupato Saturno Chameseno, in promontorio Xiphonio, ubi ad huc hodie visuntur solo æquata antiqua vestigia, et ruinæ dictæ urbis et arcis in insula prope Scopulos Cyclopum, et retinet adhuc

fincopatum nomen La Gazzena."

This fame Cham they tell you was a very great scoundrel, and that esenus, which fignified infamous, was added to his name, only to denote his character. Fazzello fays he married his own fifter. who was called Rhea; that Ceres was the fruit of this marriage; that she did not inherit the vices of her father, but reigned over Sicily with great wisdom and moderation. That she taught her subjects the method of making bread and wine, the materials for which their island produced spontaneously in great abundance. That her daughter Proferpine was of equal beauty and virtue with herfelf. That Orius king of Epirus had demanded her in marriage, and on a refusal carried her off by force; which gave occasion to the wild imagination of Greece to invent the fable of the rape of Proferpine by Pluto king of Hell, this Orius being of a morose and gloomy disposition.

Ceres has ever been the favourite deity of the Sicilians. She chose her seat of empire in the centre of the island, on the top of a high hill called Enna, where she founded the city of that name. It is still a considerable place, and is now called

Castragiovanni;

Castragiovanni; but little or nothing remain of the ruins of Enna.

Cicero gives a particular account of this place. He says, from its situation in the centre of the island, it was called *Umbilicus Siciliæ*, and describes it as one of the most beautiful and sertile spots in the world. The temple of Ceres and Enna was renowned all over the heathen world, and pilgrimages were made to it, as they are at present to Loretto. Fazzello says, it was held in such veneration that when the city was surprised and pillaged by the slaves and barbarians, they did not presume to touch this sacred temple, although it contained more riches than all the city besides.

There have been violent disputes amongst the Sicilian authors, whether Proserpine was carried off near the city of Enna, or that of Ætna, which stood at the foot of that mountain, but it is of mighty little consequence, and more respect, I think, is to be paid to the sentiments of Cicero, who gives it in favour of Enna, than the whole of them. Diodorus too is of the same opinion, and his description of this place is almost in the very words of that of Cicero. They both paint it as a perfect paradise; abounding in beautiful groves, clear springs and rivulets, and like Ætna, covered with a variety of flowers at all seasons of the year. To these authorities if you please you may add that of Milton, who compares it to Paradise itself.

--- Nor that fair field
Of Enna, where Proserpine gathering flowers,
Herself a fairer flower, by gloomy Dis
Was gathered.

If you want to have a fuller account of this place you will find it in Cicero's pleadings against Verres, and in the fifth book of Diodorus.—I have conversed with several gentlemen who have been there: they assure me that it still answers in a great measure

measure to the description of these authors.-Medals, I am told, are still found, with an elegant figure of Ceres, and an ear of wheat for the reverse; but I have not been able to procure any of I half threup

There was another temple in Sicily not less celebrated than this one of Ceres.—It was dedicated to Venus Erecina, and like the other too, was built on the fummit of a high mountain. The antient name of this mountain was Eryx, or as the Sicilians call it Erice, but is now called St. Juliano. Both mountain and temple are often mentioned by the Greek and Latin historians, and happily the Sicilian ones have no dispute about its fituation or origin; which they make to be almost as antient as that of Ceres.—Diodorus says, that Dedalus, after his flight from Crete, was hospitably received here, and by his wonderful skill in architecture added greatly to the beauty of this temple. He enriched it with many fine pieces of sculpture, but particularly with the figure of a ram of fuch exquifite workmanship that it appeared to be alive. This, I think, is likewife mentioned by Cicero.

Æneas too in his voyage from Troy to Italy, landed in this part of the island, and according to Diodorus and Thucydides, made rich prefents to this temple; but Virgil is not fatisfied with this; he must raise the piety of his hero still higher, and, in opposition to all the historians, makes Ameas the founder of the temple *. Its fame and glory continued to increase for many ages; and it was still held in greater veneration by the Romans, than it had been by the Greeks. Fazzello says, and quotes the authority of Strabo, that feven-

marbles with inferiprious and en-

^{*} Tumaicina aftris Erycino in versice fale. Fundatur Vineris Idalie; tumultoque Sacerdos' Et lucus late facer additur Anthitao.

teen cities of Sicily were laid under tribute to raile a sufficient revenue to support the dignity and enormous expences of this temple. Two hundred soldiers were appointed for its guard, and the number of its priests, priestesses, and ministers, male

and female, were incredible.

At certain feafons of the year, great numbers of pigeons, which were supposed to be the attendants of Venus, used to pass betwixt Africa and Italy; and refling for fome days on mount Eryx, and round this temple, it was then imagined by the people that the goddess herself was there in person; and on these occasions, he says, they worshipped her with all their might. Festivals were instituted in honour of the deity, and the most modest woman was only looked upon as a prude, that refused to comply with the rites. However, there were not many complaints of this kind; and it has been alledged, that the ladies of Eryx were fometimes feen looking out for the pigeons long before they arrived; and that they used to scatter peas about the temple to make them flay as long as possible.

Venus was succeeded in her possessions of Eryx by St. Juliano, who now gives his name both to the city and mountain; and indeed he has a very good title, for when the place was closely besieged, the Sicilians tell you, he appeared on the walls armed cap-a-pie, and frightened the enemy to such a degree, that they instantly took to their heels, and lest him ever since in quiet possession of it.—It would have been long before Venus and her pigeons could

have done as much for them.

Many medals are found in the neighbourhood, but there is not the least vestige of this celebrated temple.—Some marbles with inscriptions and engravings that have been found deep below ground are almost the only remaining monuments of its existence.—Suetonius says, that it had even fallen to x

rnins before the time of Tiberius; but as Venus was the favourite divinity of that emperor, he had ordered it to be magnificently repaired: however, it is somewhat difficult to reconcile this with Strabo's account; who tells us that even before his time it had been totally abandoned; and indeed this seems most probable, as every vestige of it has now disappeared, which is not commonly the case with the great works of the age of Tiberius.

Aneas landed at the port of Drepanum, at the foot of this mountain. Here he lost his father Anchises; in honour of whom, on his return from Carthage about a year after, he celebrated the games that made so great a figure in the Aneid, which Virgil introduces with a good deal of address as a compliment to the piety of Augustus, who had instituted games of the same kind in honour of Julius

Cæfar, his father by adoption.

It is fingular, that Virgil's account of this part of Sicily should be so very different from that of Homer, when there was so short a space, only a few months, between the times that these two heroes vifited it.—Indeed, Virgil feems to have followed the historians, in his conduct of this part of his poem, more than the fentiments of Homer; who makes this very country where Æneas was fo hospitably received, the habitation of Polyphemus and the Cyclops, where Ulysses lost so many of his companions, and himself made so very narrow an efcape. The island of Licosia, where he moored his fleet, lay very near the port of Drepanum, and Homer describes the adventure of Polyphemus to have happened on the shore of Sicily, opposite to that island. Virgil has taken the liberty to change the scene of action, as he was better acquainted both with the geography and history of the country. Homer, and perhaps with a good deal of propriety, places it at the foot of mount Ætna. I am afraid there

there is not so much propriety in his changing the action itself, and contradicting the account that Homer gives of it. For Ulysses says, that Poly. phemus devoured four of his companions; but that he by his address saved all the rest, and was himself the last that escaped out of the cave. Now Virgil makes Ulvss to have told a lie; for he affirms that he left Achemenides behind him; and Achemenides too gives a different account of this affair from Ulysses; he assures Æneas, that Polyphemus devoured only two of his companions; after which they put out his eye, (acuto telo) with a sharp weapon; which rather gives the idea of a spear or javelin, than that of a great beam of wood made red hot in the fire, as Homer describes it.-But there are many fuch passages.—Don't you think they feem either to indicate a negligence in Virgil, or want of deference for his mafter? neither of which, I believe, he has ever been accused of.

The Sicilian authors are by no means pleafed with Virgil for making Æneas the founder of this temple of Venus Erecina. They will only allow that the colony which he was obliged to leave there, after the burning of his ships, did, in honour of his mother Venus, build the city of Eryx around her temple: but they all infift upon it, that the temple was built by Eryx, or as they call him Erice, another fon of Venus, but much older than Æneas; the same that was found to be. fo equal a match for Hercules, but was at last killed by him, at a boxing match near the foot of this mountain. The spot where this is supposed to have happened, still retains the name of (il campo di Hercole) the field of Hercules. Thro' the whole fifth book of the Æneid, this Eryx is stiled the brother of Aneas; and, in this account of the games, Virgil introduces those very gauntlets with which he fought with Hercules, (in hoc iplo.

ald sysble was ble

ipso littore) in this very field. The fight of which, from their enormous fize, assonishes the whole host, and frightens the champion Dares so much that he refuses to fight.

Adieu. The opera begins in two days: after which, I think, we shall foon take leave of Sicily.

red the hearts of the people, it is corered with a robe of beater gold, and is adorned with forme

and appointed priedle to watch over the precious relices a MXXX ve R a Harner office a mix that

An adamption, graved by the hand of St Ro-

exicut, and extremely drings to that the poor incle takenings thave had very cold ancomfortable quarters. They have built a church around it;

noom side mor sonsflip sleavent palermo, July 21.

dered stom thence to mount XESTERDAY we walked up to the Monte Pelegrino to pay our respects to St. Rosolia, and thank her for the variety of entertainment she has afforded us. It is one of the most fatiguing expeditions I ever made in my life. The mountain is extremely high, and fo uncommonly fleep, that the road to it is very properly termed la Scala, or the Stair; before the discovery of St. Rosolia, it was looked upon as almost inaccessible, but they have now at a vast expence cut out a road, over precipices that were almost perpendicular. found the faint lying in her grotto, in the very fame attitude in which she is faid to have been discovered; her head reclining gently upon her hand, and a crucifix before her. This is a statue of the finest white was not able to the was never

white marble, and of most exquisite workmanship. It is placed in the inner part of the cavern, on the very same spot where St. Rosolia expired. It is the figure of a lovely young girl of about fifteen in an act of devotion. The artist has found means to throw fomething that is extremely touching, into the countenance and air of this beautiful statue. I never in my life faw one that affected me fo much. and am not surprized that it should have captivated the hearts of the people. It is covered with a robe of beaten gold, and is adorned with some valuable jewels. The cave is of a confiderable extent, and extremely damp, so that the poor little faint must have had very cold uncomfortable quarters. They have built a church around it; and appointed priefts to watch over the precious relics, and receive the offerings of pilgrims that visit them.

An inscription, graved by the hand of St. Rofolia herself, was found in a cave in mount Quesquina, at a considerable distance from this mountain. It is said that she was disturbed in her retreat
there, and had wandered from thence to mount
Pelegrino, as a more retired and inaccessible place.
I shall copy it exactly as it is preserved in the
poor little saint's own Latin.

EGO ROSOLIA
SINIBALDI QUIS QUINE ET ROSARUM
DOMINI FILIA AMORE
DEI MEI JESU
CHRISTI
IN HOC
ANTRO HABITARI DECREVI.

After St. Rosolia was scared from the cave where this inscription was found, she was never more

more heard of, till her bones were found about

five hundred years after in this fpot. Vo hatter but

The prospect from the top of mount Pelegrino is beautiful and extensive. Most of the Lipari islands are discovered in a very clear day, and likewise a large portion of mount Ætna, although at the distance of almost the whole length of Sicily. The Bagaria too, and the Colle, covered over with a number of fine country houses and gardens, make a beautiful appearance. The city of Palermo flands within less than two miles of the foot of the mountain, and is feen to great advantage. Many people went to this mountain during the time of the great illumination, from whence they pretend it has a fine effect; but this unfortunately we neglected.

Near the middle of the mountain, and not far from its summit, there still appears some remains of a celebrated castle, the origin of which the Sicilian authors carry back to the most remote antiquity. Massa fays, it is supposed to have been built in the reign of Saturn immediately after the flood; for in the time of the earliest Carthaginian Wars, it was already much respected on account of its venerable antiquity.—It was then a place of strength, and is often mentioned by the Greek historians. Diodorus fays, in his twenty-third book, that Hamilcar kept, possession of it for three years, against all the power of the Romans; who, with an army of forty thousand men, attempted in to run his inips vain to dislodge him.

The fituation of Palermo is feen, I think, to more advantage from the Monte Pelegrino than from any where elfe. This beautiful city stands near the extremity of a kind of natural amphitheatre, formed by high and rocky mountains; but the country that lies betwixt the city and these mountains, is one of the richest and most beautiful spots

in the world. The whole appears a magnificent garden, filled with fruit-trees of every species, and watered by clear fountains and rivulets, that form a variety of windings through this delightful plain.—From the singularity of this situation, as well as from the richness of the soil, Palermo has had many flattering epithets bestowed upon it; particularly by the poets, who have denominated it Canca d'oro. The Golden Shell, which is at once expressive both of its situation and richness. It has likewise been stilled Aurea Valle, Hortus Sicilia, &c. and to include all these together, the lasting term of Felix has been added to its name, by which you will find it distinguished even in the maps.

Many of the etymologists alledge that it is from the richness of this valley that it had its original name of Panormus, which, in the old Greek language, they pretend, fignified Allagarden: but others fay there is no occasion for straining fignifications, and affert, with more appearance of plausibility, that it was called Panormus, from the fize and conveniency of its harbours; one of which is recorded antiently to have extended into the very centre of the city. And this is the account Diodorus gives of it; it was called Panormus, fays he, because its harbour even pene trated to the very innermost parts of the city. Panormus, in the Greek language fignifying All a port: and Procopius, in his history of the wars of the Goths affure us, that in the time of Bellifarius, the port was deep enough for that general to run his ships up to the very walls of the city, and give the affault from them. It is not now fo well entitled to this name as it was formerly. The'e harbours have been almost entirely destroyed and filled up; most probably I think by the violent torrents from the mountains that furround it; which are recorded fometimes to have laid side to our of the richeft and most beautiful in

waste great part of the city. Fazzello speaks of an inundation, of which he was an eye-witness, that came down from the mountains with such sury, that they thought the city would have been entirely swept away. He says, it burst down the wall near to the royal palace, and bore away every thing that opposed its passage; churches, convents, houses, to the number of two thousand, and drowned upwards of three thousand people.

Now the fragments and ruins carried to the sea by such a forment alone would be sufficient to full up a little harbour, so that we are not to be surprised, that these capacious ports, for which it had been so much celebrated, no longer exist.

Next to the Chameseno, Palermo is generally supposed to be the most antient city in the island, Indeed, there still remain some monuments that carry back its origin to the times of the most remote antiquity. A bishop of Lucera has wrote on this subject. He is clearly of opinion that Palermo was founded in the days of the first patriarchs. You will laugh at this; - so did I; -but the bishop does not go to work upon conjecture only; he supports his opinion with such proofs, as I own to you, flaggered me a good deal. A Chaldean inscription was discovered about fix hundred years ago, on a block of white marble; it was in the reign of William II. who ordered it to be translated into Latin and Italian. The bishop fays, there are many fragments in Palermo with broken inferiptions in this language; and feems to think it beyond a doubt, that the city was founded by the Chaldeans, in the very early ages of the world. This is the literal translation: --- "During the time that " Isaac, the fon of Abraham, reigned in the val-" ley of Damascus, and Esau, the son of Isaac, in " Idumea, a great multitude of Hebrews, accom-" panied by many of the people of Damascus, and

" many

If many Phoenicians, coming into this triangular in this most is illand, took up their habitation in this most which they gave the name shiof-Panormus," bluow which they gave the name

The bishop trauslaves another Chaldean inscription, which is indeed a great curiosity. It is still preserved, though not with that care that so valuable a monument of antiquity deserves. It is placed over one of the old gates of the city, and when that gate falls to ruin, it will probably be for ever lost. The translation is in Latin, but I shall give it you in English——" There is no other God but "one God. There is no other power but this same " God. There is no other conqueror but this God whom we adore. The commander of this tower is Saphu, the son of Eliphar, son of Esau, brown there of Jacob, son of Isaac, son of Abraham. "The name of the tower is Baych, and the name of the neighbouring tower is Pharat."

These two inscriptions seem to resect a mutual light upon each other. Fazzello has preserved them both, and remarks upon this last, that it appears evidently from it, that the tower of Baych was built antecedent to the time of Saphu, (or, as we translate it, Zaphu) who is only mentioned as commander of the tower, but not as its sounder.

Part of the ruins of this tower still remain, and many more Chaldean inscriptions have been found amongst them, but so broken and mangled, that little could be made of them. Fazzello is in great indignation at some malons he found demolishing these precious relies, and complains bitterly of it to the senate, whom he with justice upbraids for their negligence and indifference.

Conversing on this subject to ther night with a gentleman who is well versed in the antiquities of this place, I took the liberty of objecting to the Greek etymology, Panormus, it appearing extremely

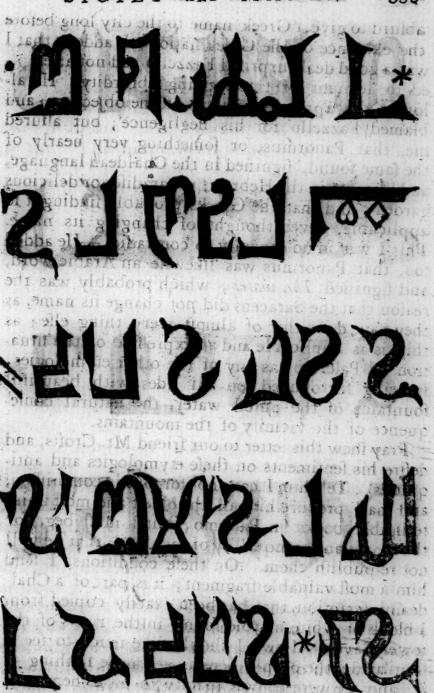
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abfurd to give a Greek name to the city long before the existence of the Greek nation I added, that I was a good deal surprised Fazzello had not attempted to account for this feeming abfurdity. He allowed the apparent validity of the objection, and blamed Fazzello for his negligence; but affured me, that Panormus, or fomething very nearly of the same found, fignified in the Chaldean language, and likewife in the Hebrew, a paradife, or delicious garden; and that the Greeks probably finding it fo applicable, never thought of changing its name. This I was in no capacity to contradid.—He added too, that Panormus was likewife an Arabic word, and fignified This water; which probably was the reason that the Saracens did not change its name, as they have done that of almost every thing else; as this is as applicable and as expressive of the situation of Palermo, as any of the other etymologies; it being furrounded on all fides with beautiful fountains of the purest water, the natural confequence of the vicinity of the mountains.

Pray shew this letter to our friend Mr. Crosts, and desire his sentiments on these etymologies and antiquities. Tell him I have not forgot his commission, and half procure him all the oldest and most unintelligible books in Palermo; but I must beg, for the repose and tranquillity of mankind, that he will not re-publish them. On these conditions, I send him a most valuable fragment; it is part of a Chaldean inscription that has been exactly copied from a block of white marble found in the ruins of the tower Baych—I own I should like much to see it translated; the people here as yet made nothing of it: and we were in no capacity to assist them.



SICILY AND MALTA. 335



[CISUSSE.



The thermometer is at act



On consulting the Bible, I find, that in our translation, the fon of Efau is called Eliphaz, and Eliphaz' fon, who was captain of this tower, Zepho. The variation of the names you fee is but trifling. It is not improbable that the other tower, Pharat, by a fmall variation of the same kind, has been named from their coufin, Pharez, the fon of Judah, who got the flart of his brother Zarah. You will find the flory at the end of the thirty-eighth chapter of Genelis. The thirty-feventh chapter

will give you some account of Eliphar and Saphu; but I can find no elymology for the name of the tower Baych. I date say Mr. Cross can tell you what it means—Pharez signifies a breach; a very manipulous name one would think for a tower.—Adieu. The weather has become exceeding hot. The thermometer is at 80.

Ever your's.



Palermo, July 24th.

In the course of our acquaintance with some gentlemen of sense and observation in this place, we have learned many things concerning the ideal that perhaps may be worthy of your attention; and as this day is so hot that I cannot go out, I shall endeavour to recollect some of them, both for your amusement and my own. The thermometer is up at 71½—So you may judge of the situation of our northern constitutions.

There is one thing, however, that I have always observed in these southern climates; that although the degree of heat is much greater than with us, yet it is not commonly attended with that weight and oppression of spirits that generally accompany our sultry days in Summer.—I am sure, that in such a day as this, in England, we should be panting for breath; and no mortal would think either of reading or writing.—That is not the case here;

here; I never was in better spirits in my life: indeed I believe the quantities of ice we eat may contribute a good deal towards it; for I had, that in a very violent heat, there is no fuch cordial to the spirits as ice, or a draught of ice-water: it is not only from the cold it communicates, but, like the cold bath, from the fuddentels of that communication, it braces the stomach, and gives a new tone to the fibres. It is ftrange that this piece of luxury (in my opinion the greatest of all, and perhaps the only healthy one) should still be so

much neglected with us.

I knew an English lady at Nice, who in a short time was cured of a threatening confumption, only by a free indulgence in the use of ices; and I am persuaded, that in skilful hands, few remedies would be more effectual in many of our stomach and inflammatory complaints, as hardly any thing has a stronger or more immediate effect upon the whole frame; and furely our administering of warm drinks and potions in these complaints tend often to nourish the disease-It is the common practice here, in inflammatory fevers, to give quantities of ice-water to drink; nay, fo far have they carried it, that Dr. Sanghes, a celebrated Sicilian physician, covered over the breast and belly of his patients with fnow or ice; and they affure us, in many cases, with great success.—But, indeed, I ought in justice to add, that this physician's practice has not been generally adopted.

Perhaps it is from the present benefit I find from ice, that I have faid so much in favour of it; for I am fully persuaded, that if I had not a quantity of it standing here below the table, I should very foon be obliged to give up writing, and go to bed; but whenever I begin to flag, another glass is fure

to fet me to rights again.

I was going to give you some account of the fisheries of this island.

The

The catching the tunny-fish constitutes one of the principal Sicilian amusements during the summer months; and the curing and sending them to foreign markets makes one of the greatest branches of their commerce.—We were invited yesterday by the Prince Sperlinga to a party of tunny-fishing; but the violence of the heat prevented it.

These fish do not make their appearance in the Sicilian seas till towards the latter end of May; at which time the Tonnaros, as they call them, are prepared for their reception. This is a kind of aquatic castle, formed at a great expense, of strong nets, sastened to the bottom of the sea by

anchors and heavy leaden weights.

These tonnaros are erected in the passages amongst the rocks and islands that are most frequented by the tunny-fish. They take care to shut up with nets the entry into these passages, all but one little opening, which is called the outward gate of the tonnaro. This leads into the first apartment, or, as they call it, the hall. As foon as the fish have got into the hall, the fishermen, who fland fentry in their boats during the feafon, thut the outer door, which is no more than letting down a small piece of net, which effectually prevents the tunny from returning by the way they came. They then open the inner door of the hall, which leads to the second apartment, which they call the anti-chamber, and by making a noise on the furface of the water, they foon drive the tunny-fish into it. As foon as the whole have got into the anti-chamber, the inner door of the hall is again shut, and the outer door is opened for the reception of more company.

Some tonnaros have a great number of apartments, with different names to them all; the faloon, the parlour, the dining-room, &c. but the last apartment is always stiled la Camera della

Morte.

Morte, The chamber of Death: this is composed of stronger nets and heavier anchors than the others.

As foon as they have collected a sufficient number of tunny-fish they are driven from all the other apartments into the chamber of death; when the slaughter begins. The infhermen, and often the gentlemen too, armed with a kind of spear or harpoon, attack the poor desenceless animals on all sides; which now giving themselves up to despair, dash about with great force and agility, throwing the water over all the boats, and tearing the nets to pieces, they often knock out their brains against the rocks or anchors, and sometimes

even against the boats of their enemies.

You fee there is nothing very generous or manly in this sport.—The taking of the Pesce Spada, or fword-fish, is a much more noble diversion: no art is made use of to ensuare him; but with a small harpoon, fixed to a long line, they attack him in the open feas, and will often strike him at a very confiderable distance. It is exactly the whale-fishing in miniature. The Sicilian fishermen (who are abundantly superstitious) have a Greek sentence which they make use of as a charm to bring him near their boats. This is the only bait they use, and they pretend that it is of wonderful efficacy, and absolutely obliges him to follow them; but if unfortunately he should overhear them speak a word of Italian, he plunges under water immediately, and will appear no more.

As these fish are commonly of a great fize and strength, they will sometimes run four hours after they are struck, and afford excellent sport.—I have seen them with a sword sour or sive seet long, which gives them a formidable appearance in the water, particularly after they are wounded. The slesh of these animals is excellent; it is more like beef than sish, and the common way

of dreffing it is in fleaks.

The fishing of the pefce spada is most considerable in the lea of Mellina, where they have likewife great quantities of eels, particularly the Morena, to much esteemed amongst the Romans, which I think is indeed the finelt tish I ever eat.

But it is not only their large fifth that they firike with harpoons; they have the fame method of taking mullet, dories, a kind of mackarel, and many other species; but this is always performed in the night. As foon as it is dark, two men get into a small boat; one of them holds a lighted torch over the furface of the water, the other stands with his harpoon ready poised in his hand. The light of the torch foon brings the fift to the furface, when the harpooner immediately firikes them. I have feen great quantities killed in this manner, both here and at Naples. A large fleet of boats employed in this kind of fishing make a beautiful appearance in the water, in a fine fumin a the input less, and will old to mer's night.

The coral fishery is chiefly practifed at Trapani: they have invented a machine there, which answers the purpose much beyond their expectations. This is only a great cross of wood, to the centre of which is fixed a heavy hard stone, capable of carrying the cross to the bottom. Pieces of small net are ried to each limb of the cross, which is poised horizontally by a rope, and let down into the water. As foon as they feel it touch the bottom, the rope is made fast to the boat. They then row about, all over the coral beds: the confequence of which is, the great stone breaks off the coral from the rocks, and it is immediately entangled in the nets.-Since this invention the coral fishery has turned out to considerable account.

The people of Trapani are effected the most ingenious of the island; they are the authors of many

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many useful and ornamental inventions. An artift there, has lately discovered a method of making Cameios, which are a perfect imitation of the antient ones engraved on the onyx. They are done on a kind of hard shell from pastes of the best antiques, and so admirably executed, that it is often difficult to diffinguish the antient from the modern. These set in gold, are generally worn as bracelets, and are at present in high estimation amongst the ladies of quality here. Mrs. Hamilton procured a pair of them last year, and carried them to Naples, where they have been much admired. Commissions were immediately sent over. and the man has now more business than he can manage; however, we have been fortunate enough to procure a few pairs of them for our friends. I have feen cameios that have cost two hundred guineas, that could scarce be distinguished from one of theferent day and an appeared to the

The difficulties under which the poor Sicilians -labour, from the extreme oppression of their government, obliges them fometimes to invent branches of commerce that nature feems to have denied them, as they are not allowed to enjoy. those she has bestowed.—The sugar-cane was very much cultivated in this island, but the duties imposed were so enormous, that it has been almost abandoned.—But their crops of wheat alone, were they under a free government, would foon be sufficient to render this little nation one of the richest and most flourishing in the world; for even in the wretched state of cultivation it is in at present, one good crop, I am told, is sufficient to maintain the island for seven years. You will be a good deal furprifed, after this, to hear that the exportation of this commodity has been prohibited for these several years past; at least to all such as fare not able to pay most exorbitantly for that privilege.

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privilege. The confequence is, that corn has become a drug. The common price of the falma, which is two loads, was about thirty-one shillings, at present it is reduced to five shillings and fixpence, and there is a probability that it will still fall lower.

This crop, which has been very abundant, I am told, in many places they have hardly been at the pains to gather in, as there is little probability of this cruel prohibition being removed. The farmers are already ruined, and the ruin of their masters must inevitably follow. This is the method the ministry of Naples, or rather that of Spain, has taken to humble the pride of the Sicilian barons, whose power they pretend is still very extenfive, and their jurisdiction absolute; most of them possessing a right of life and death in their own domain. However there is a probability that they will foon be obliged to relinquish their privileges. The complaint is universal, and if the ministry persevere in these rigorous measures, there must either be a revolt, or, they soon must be reduced to a state of poverty as well as of servitude at believe indeed most of them would readily embrace any plaufible scheme, to shake off their yoke; as in general they appear to be people of great fenfibility, with high notions of honour and liberty.

Talking of the natural riches of their island,—
Yes, say they, if these were displayed, you would have reason indeed to speak of them. Take a look of these mountains,—they contain rich veins of every metal, and many of the Roman mines still remain;—but to what end should we explore them?
—It is not we that should reap the profit—Nay, a discovery of any thing very rich might possibly prove the ruin of its possessor.—No,—in our present situation the hidden treasures of the island must

ever remain a profound secret. Were we happy enough to enjoy the blessings of your constitution, you might call us rich indeed. Many hidden doors of opulence would then be opened, which now are not even thought of, and we should soon re-assume our antient name and consequence; but

at present we are nothing.

This is the language that some of the first people amongst them hold with us. However, they still boast that they retain more of the seudal government than any nation in Europe. The shadow indeed remains, but the substance is gone long ago. It has long been the object of the Bourbon ministry to reduce the power of the barons in every kingdom. Richlieu began the system in France, and it has ever since been prosecuted by his successor; its influence has now spread over the whole of their possessions in Europe; of which, as this is the most remote, it has likewise been the longest in reaching it.

The foundation of the feudal fystem was first laid here by the count Rugeiro, about the middle of the eleventh century, immediately after he had driven the Saracens out of the island. He divided Sicily into three parts; the first, by confent of his army, was given to the church; the second he bestowed upon his officers, and the third

he referved for himself.

Of these three branches, or as they call them Braccios, (arms) he composed his parliament, the form of which remains the same to this day. The Braccio Militaire is composed of all the barons of the kingdom, to the number of two hundred and fiftyone, who are still obliged to military service: their chief is the prince Butero, who is hereditary president of the parliament; for in conformity to the genius of the seudal government some of the great offices are still hereditary. The three archibishops,

bishops, all the bishops, abbies, priors, and dignified clergy, amounting to near seventy, form the Braccio Ecclesiastico: The archbishop of Palermo is their chief. The Braccio Demaniale is formed by election, like our house of commons: there are forty-three royal cities, stiled Demaniale, that have a right to elect members. Every house-holder had a vote in this election. Their chief is the member for Palermo; who is likewise prætor or mayor of the city. He is an officer of the highest rank, and his power is very extensive; inferior only to that of the viceroy; in whose absence, the greatest part of the authority devolves upon him. He has a company of grenadiers for his body guard, and receives the title of excellency.

The prætor, together with fix senators, who are stiled patricians, have the management of the civil government of the city. He is appointed every year, by the king or by the viceroy, which is the same thing; for I don't find that the people any longer exercise even the form of giving their votes; so that the very shadow of liberty has now disappeared as well as the substance.—You may judge of the situation of liberty in a kingdom where all courts civil and criminal are appointed by regal authority, and where all offices are conferred only by the will of the sovereign, and depend entirely

upon his caprice.

I own I feel most sincerely for the Sicilians, who, I think, are possessed of many admirable qualities. But the spirit of every nation must infallibly sink, under an oppressive and tyrannical government.— Their spirit however has in a great measure kept them free from one branch of tyranny, the most dreadful of all, that of the inquisition. The kings of Spain wanted to establish it in its full force; but the barons, accustomed to exercise despotic government themselves, could not bear the thoughts of becom-

ing flaves to a fet of ignorant Spanish priests; and, I believe, they took the only way that was lest to avoid it. Every inquisitor that pretended to more zeal than they thought became him, was immediately assistanted; particularly if he presumed to interfere with the conduct or sentiments of the nobility. This soon took off the edge of their zeal, and reduced the holy office to a becoming moderation. However, they are extremely circums spect in their conversation about religious matters, and generally advise strangers to be on their guard, as the power of the inquittion, although considerably reduced, is by no means annihilated.

The laws of Sicily are scattered in a great number of volumes; these the king of Sardinia intended to abridge, and collect into one code, but unfortunately he was not long enough in possession of the island, to accomplish this useful work.—But where there is an authority above all laws, laws

can be but of little service. Publish them and the

The power of the viceroy is very absolute; he has not only the command of all the military force in the kingdom, but likewise presides with unbounded authority in all civil tribunals; and as he is also invested with the legantine power, his sway is equally great in religious matters.

He has the right of nominating to all the great offices in the kingdom; and confirming of all dig-

nitles, both civil and ecclefiafticalsilinic lent donly

In visiting the prisons, a ceremony which he performs with great pomp twice a year, he has the power of liberating whatever prisoners he pleases; of reducing or altering their sentences, their crimes and accusations having first been read over to him. Indeed, that there may be some appearance of a regard to law and justice, his counsellor always attends him on these occasions, to mark out the limits of the law.—This is an officer of very high

high rank, appointed to assist the viceroy in his decisions, where the case may appear intricate or dubious; and always is, or ought to be, one of the ablest lawyers in the island. For the most part, this office has been given to strangers, who are supposed to have no kindred or particular connections here, that in giving their judgment they may be free from all prejudice and partiality. He has free admittance into all courts and tribunals, that he may be the better enabled to give the viceroy an account of their proceedings.

The whole military force of Sicily amounts at present, from what I can learn, to 9500 men, about 1200 of which are cavalry. Many of their cities and fortresses would require a very numerous garrison to desend them: particularly Messina, Syracuse, and Palermo: but indeed the state of their fortifications, as well as that of their artillery, is such, that (even if they were inclined) they could

make but a small defence, single and a min all and

If this island were in the hands of a naval power, I think it is evident, that it must command the whole Levant trade: There are feveral little ports at each end of it, befides the great ones of Trapani, Syracuse, and Messina, which lie pretty near the three angles of the triangle. Whatever thips had paffed either of these, the others could be apprised of in the space of half an hour, by means of figual towers, which the Sicilians have erected all around their island to warn them against sudden invasions from the Barbary fide. These towers are built on every little promontory, within fight of each other. Fires. are always kept ready for lighting, and a person is. appointed to watch at each of them, fo that the whole island can be alarmed, they assure us, in the space of anthour.

By the bye, we have been witness here of a practice that appears to be a very iniquitous one, and in the end, I should think, must prove the destruction of our Mediterranean trade. Several ships have put in at this port with English colours, but to our furprise, not one Englishman on board. These I find they call Bandiere men; -perhaps it is a known practice; although, I own, I was an utter ftranger to it. They are very numerous in these seas, and carry on a considerable trade through the whole of the Mediterranean, to the great detriment of our own ships. Most of them belong to Genoa and Sicily, though they pass under the name of Minorquins. They purchase Mediterraneau pals-ports, I am told, from fome of the governors of our garrifons, which entitles them during the term specified in their passports, to trade under English colours. I am affored that the number of these Bandiere men amounts to fome hundreds. They have often one or two English failors on board, or at least some person that fpeaks the language, to answer when they are challenged. Pray can you tell me if this practice is: known in England?

Adieu. The heat is become intolerable, and I am able to write no more;—however, I should not have given it up yet, but my ice is all melted, and I have not the conscience to send out a servant for more: I dare say, you are very glad of it, and wish it had been melted long ago. If this continues, I believe we ourselves shall be melted. The thermometer is above eighty-two, and the heat still seems to increase.—The sea has even become too hot for bathing; and it does not

at all refresh us now as it did formerly.

Farewell.

r the end, I would think and prison in after; tion of our Medierraneau trade - Secret thips

Thefe I find they fall Bandlere men, --perhaps it is a knowle practice, strough I own I was an

have pyrxxx this post Transland on board

de portunua y est est ved I'l Palermo, July 26th.

W E have now got every thing ready for our departure, and if the wind continues favourable, this is probably the last letter I shall write you from Sicily. However, I had still a great deal more to say, both of the Sicilians and their island, and shall leave them, I assure you, with a good

deal of regret.

A.111

Two chebecks failed this morning for Naples. We had the offer of a passage; but had already engaged a little vessel for ourselves.—A young nobleman the marquis of —, was shipped off in one of them, with orders never more to set his foot in Palermo. Indeed we are much surprised that his sentence is so mild, as he has been guilty of a crime which in catholic countries is generally punished with the greatest rigour;—no less than the debauching a nun.—He met with the young lady at a bathing place, about thirty miles from this, where she had been sent from her convent for the recovery of her health; her mother was along with her, but as the two young people were first cousins, and had lived together like brother and sister, the old lady thought there could be no risk in allowing them their wonted familiarity.

The nun foon recovered her health, grew fat, and returned to her convent. This about fix or feven months ago; and it is only a few days fince the fatal discovery was made; but alas: it would

conceal

conceal no longer. He is banished Sicily for life; and his estate, or the greatest part of it, is confiscated. He may think himself happy they have treated him with so much lenity: Had his jury been composed of priests and confessors, he must have died, without benefit of clergy; for this is the first mortal sin, for which there is neither atonement nor absolution;——" to lie with a "nun, and yet not be in orders."

The punishment of the poor unfortunate girl is not determined; however, I am told, it will be a terrible one: probably confinement in a dungeon for seven or eight years, without any company but a skull and a crucifix; and to live all that time upon bread and water. I saw a nun at Portallegre in Portugal, that had suffered this very

punishment for the fame crime.

This story has been kept a profound secret, and if we had not been on a very intimate sooting with some people here, we never should have heard of it.

The Sicilians still retain some of the Spanish customs, though nothing of their gravity and taciturnity: the younger sons of the nobility are stilled Don by their christened names, and the daughters Donna; like our appellation of lord

daughters Donna; like our appellation of lord and lady to the fons and daughters of dukes. The eldest fon has commonly the title of count or marquis, but they are not all counts as in France and Germany, where I have seen six counts in one house, and very near twice the number of

barons in another.

One of the most common titles here as well as at Naples, is that of Prince; and although these were only created by Philip II. of Spain, they take rank of all the other nobility, some of whom, particularly the counts, carry their origin as far back as the time of the Normans, and look with

great contempt on these upstart Princes. The Dukes and Marquisses are not so old: the first were created by Charles V. and the second, tho' an inserior title, by King Alphonso, in the fisteenth century.—So that the dignity of the Sicilian titles may be said to be in the inverse ratio of

their antiquities. An all your added to the state of the

The luxury of the people here, like that of the Neapolitans, confift chiefly in their equipages and horses; but by a wise law of the King of Sardinia, which I am furprised should still remain in force, the viceroy alone is allowed to drive in the city with fix horses; the prætor, the archbishop and president of the parliament with four; all the rest of the nobility are restricted to two. But this is only within the gates of Palermo; and when they go to the country, there is none of them that drive with less than four: besides. every family of distinction has at least two or three carriages in daily use; for no man of fashion is fo unpolite as to refuse his wife a chariot of her own, of which she has the entire command; (without this the Marino could never fubfift) and the upper fervants of the first families would be just as much ashamed to be seen on foot as their masters.—We took the liberty to ridicule the folly of this practice; they allow of its abfurdity, and wish to break through it; but who is to lead the way? We even prevailed with some of the young nobility, which I affure you was no small condefcenfion, to walk the streets with us during the illuminations; but even this condescension shewed the folly of the prejudice in a stronger light than if they had refused us; for they would not be prevailed on to ffir out, till they had fent their fervants about ten yards before them, with large wax flambeaux, although the whole city was in a flame or light. You may believe we did not fpare them upon this occasion; but it was all

to no purpose. However, it is possible that we may overlook many customs of our own, that are not less ridiculous; for ridicule for the most part is relative, and depends only on time and place. Perhaps you may remember the Prince of Anamaboo .- I should like to hear the account he would give of the English nation in his own country; for some of our customs struck him in a still more ridiculous light.—Walking out in St. James's park, in the afternoon, he observed one of his acquaintance driving in a phaeton with four horses. The prince burst into a violent fit of laughing when they asked him what was the matter?-" Vat the devil, (faid the Prince in his " bad English) has that fellow eat so much din-" ner that now it takes: four horses to carry him? -I rode out with him this morning, and he " was then fo light, that van little horse ran " away with him.—He must either be a great " fool, or a great glutton."—Another time they infifted on the prince going to the play.—He went; but he foon tired of it, and returned to his companions.- "Well, Prince, (faid they) what did " you fee?-Vat did I fee, (replied he with the ut-" most contempt) I did fee some men playing the " fiddle-and some men playing the fool."

I only infer from this that it is with some degree of caution we should ridicule the customs of other nations: a Sicilian, perhaps, would laugh with as much justice at many of our customs;—that for instance, of obliging people to drink when they have no inclination to it;—that in the North of eating Soland Geese before dinner, to give them an appetite?—that of Physicians and lawyers wearing enormous wigs, and many others that will naturally occur to you, none of which appear in the least ridiculous to the people that practice them; who would no doubt desend them as strenuously as the Sicilians do the necessity of carrying

carrying flambeaux before them during the great illumination.——Indeed, they have just now given us an admirable specimen of some of our ridicules, in one of their opera-dances, with which we have been a good deal entertained.

I believe I told you that the dancers are lately come from England: They have brought upon the stage many of the capital London characters:-The bucks, the macaronies, the prigs, the cits, and fome others still more respectable, these are well supported; and afford a good deal of laughing. But I am interrupted, otherwife I should have given you a more particular account of them. Adieu. The heat is intolerable; and there is no possibility of walking out .- We complain without reason of our own climate; and King Charles's observation I am persuaded was just; "That there is hardly any climate, where, throughout the year, we can have fo much exercise in the open air." In SuA " ... northly issig a to look " the year on the printe going to the play self

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LETTER XXXV.

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Palermo, July 27th.

THE Sicilians are animated in conversation, and their action for the most part is so just and so expressive of their sentiments, that without hearing what is said, one may comprehend the subject of their discourse. We used to think the French and Neapolitans great adepts in this art; but they are much outdone by the Sicilians; both in the variety, and justness of their gestion-lation.

The origin of this custom they carry so far back as the time of the earliest tyrants of Syracuse, who to prevent conspiracies, had forbid their subjects, under the most severe penalties, to be seen in parties talking together. This obliged them to invent a method of communicating their sentiments by dumb shew, which they pretend has been transmitted from generation to generation ever since.

I think it is not at all improbable that this cuftom too may have given the first idea of comedy; as we find, that some short time after, Epicarmus, a native of that city, was the author of this invention.

The Sicilians till lately retained a great many foolish and superstitious customs; but particularly in their marriages and suneral ceremonies: it would be tedious to give you an account of all these; some of them are still practised in the wild and mountainous parts of the island.—As soon as the marriage ceremony is performed, two of the attendants

attendants are ready to cram a spoonful of honey into the mouths of the bride and bridegroom: pronouncing it emblematical of their love and union, which they hope will ever continue as fweet to their fouls, as that honey is to their palates .-They then begin to throw handfuls of wheat upon them, which is continued all the way to the house of the bridegroom. This is probably the remains of some antient rite to Ceres, their favourite divinity, and they think it cannot fail of procuring them a numerous progeny:-however, the Sicilian women have no occasion for any charm. to promote this, as, in general, they are abundantly prolifick, even without it: Fazzello gives an account of women having frequently upwards of forty children, and Carrera mentions one who had forty-feven.

The young couple are not allowed to taste of the marriage-seast; this they pretend is to teach them patience and temperance; but when dinner is finished, a great bone is presented to the bridegroom by the bride's father, or one of her nearest relations, who pronounces these words: "Rodi tu "quest osso, &c. Pick you this bone, for you have now taken in hand to pick one, which you will find much harder and of more difficult digestion."—Perhaps this may have given rise to the common saying, when one has undertaken any thing arduous or difficult, that "He

The Sicilians, like most other nations in Europe, carefully avoid marrying in the month of May, and look upon such marriages as extremely inauspicious. This piece of superstition is as old, perhaps older than the time of the Romans, by whose authors it is frequently mentioned; and by whom it has been transmitted to almost every nation in Europe. It is somewhat unaccountable, that so ridiculous an idea, which can have no foundation in nature, should have stood its ground for so many

ages.—There are indeed other customs still more trivial, that are not less universal,—That of making April fools on the first day of that month; the ceremony of the cake on Twelsth-night; and some others that will occur to you, of which, no more than this, I have ever been able to learn the

origin.

The marriages of the Sicilian nobility are celebrated with great magnificence; and the number of elegant carriages produced on these occasions is allouishing. I wanted to discover when this great luxury in carriages had taken its rile; and have found au account of the marriage of the daughter of one of their viceroys to the duke of Bivona, in the year 1551. It is described by one Elenco, who was a spectator of the ceremony. He fays the ladies as well as gentlemen were all mounted on fine hor es, sumptuously caparisoned, and preceded by pages: that there were only three carriages in the city, which were used by invalids who were not able to ride on horseback. These he calls Carette, which word now fignifies a little cart.

The Sicilian ladies marry very young, and frequently live to see the fifth or fixth generation. You will expect, no doubt, that I should say something of their beauty: in general they are sprightly and agreeable; and in most parts of Italy they would be esteemed handsome.—A Neapolitan or a Roman would surely pronounce them so.—But a Piedmontese would declare them very ordinary; so indeed would most Englishmen.—Nothing so vague as our ideas of semale beauty: they change in every climate; and the criterion is no where to

be found.—

" In Scotland at the Orcades, and there,

[&]quot; Ask where's the North ?-at York, 'tis on the Tweed,

[&]quot; At Nova Zembla, of the Lord knows where."

No two nations,—perhaps no two men, have affixed precifely the same characteristics; and every one exalts his idea of it, according to the beauty of the women he is accustomed to see; so that even the fame person may sometimes appear beautiful, fometimes ugly, just in proportion as we have seen others that are more or less so.—I remember, after making the tour of Savoy and the Lower Valais, every woman we met in Switzerland appeared an angel. The fame thing happens in travelling through some parts of Germany; and you will eafily recollect the furprifing difference betwixt a beauty at Milan and one at Turin, although thefe places lie adjacent to each other. - It is a pity that the Juno of Zeuxis has been loft, if it were no more than to have shewn us the notion the ancients had of a perfect beauty. Indeed, the Venus of Medicis has been confidered as a model of perfection, but it is furely abfurd,—for who ever heard of a perfect beauty of five feet high!—the very idea is ridiculous; and whatever figure her goddesship might make amongst antient divinities, in the Pantheon at Rome, I am afraid she would cut but a forry one amongst the modern ones in that of London.—In fhort, I believe we may fafely conclude, that beauty is a relative quality, and the To kalon is no longer the same, no more in a physical than a moral fense, in any two places on the globe.

The ladies here have remarkable fine hair, and they understand how to dress and adorn it to the greatest advantage. It is now only used as an embellishment; but in former times we are told, that like that of Sampson it was found to be the strength and protection of their country.—There is a paradox for you, that all the wise men of the East could hardly solve.—Their historians relate, (in whose reign I believe is rather dubious) that this

city had fuffered a long fiege from the Saracens, and was greatly reduced by famine; but what distressed them still more, there were no materials to be found for making bowstrings, and they were on the point of furrendering.—In this dilemma, a patriotic dame stepped forth, and proposed to the women, that the whole of them should cut off their hair, and twift it into bowstrings: This was immediately complied with.-The heroism of the women, you must know, ever excite that of the men.-The befieged, animated by this gallant facrifice of the fair, renewed their defence with fuch vigour, that the affailants were beat off; and a reinforcement foon after arriving, the city was faved.—The ladies still value themselves on this flory, which you may believe has not been forgotten by their bards.-" The hair of our ladies " (fays one of their quaint poets) is still employ-" ed in the same office; but now it discharges " no other shafts but those of Cupid; and the " only cords it forms are the cords of love."

The Sicilians are much fonder of study than their neighbours on the continent, and their education is much more attended to. We were a good deal surprised to find, that instead of that frivolity and nothingness, which so often constitute the conversation of the Italian nobility, here their delight was to talk on subjects of literature, of history, of politics, but chiefly of poetry; for the other branches of knowledge and science are only general: This is the only one that may be faid to be universal. Every person, in some period of his life, is fure to be inspired; and a lover is never believed fo long as he can speak of his passion in profe; and, contrary to our way of reasoning, is only reckoned true in proportion as he is poetical. Thus, inspiration, you see, has there become the

test of truth.

We were aftonished on our first arrival at Palermo, to hear ourselves addressed in English by fome of the young nobility; but fill more fo, to find them intimately acquainted with many of our celebrated poets and philosophers .- Milton, Shakefpeare, Dryden, Pope, Bacon, Bolingbroke, we found in feveral libraries, not in the translation, but generally in the best editions of the original.

Our language, indeed, has become fo much in vogue, that it is now looked upon as no immaterial part of a polite education: the viceroy, the Marquis Fogliano, a man of great merit and humanity, has made some of our authors his favourite study, and greatly encourages the progress it is making in his kingdom. Many of the nobility speak it a little; and some of them even with ease and fluency, although they have never been out of their island. The Marquis Natali, the Counts Statela and Buschemi, the Duke of St. Micheli, &c. in whose company we have enjoyed a great deal of pleasure, and whose knowledge and erudition is the least of their praise. Adieu.

Ever your's.

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LETTER XXXVI.

Palermo, July 28th.

I HAD almost forgot to fay any thing of the opera:-It would have been very ungrateful, for we have been much delighted with it. The first and fecond man, are both admirable fingers, and I make no doubt you will have them in London in a few years; neither of them are as yet known, and I dare say at present they might be engaged for a very moderate price; but in Italy they will foon be taught to estimate their value.—The name of the first is Pacherotti; he is very young, and an entire stranger in the musical world; yet I am perfuaded, that after he has been heard on the different theatres in Italy, he will be effected one of their capital performers. His excellence is the pathetic, at present too much neglected on most theatres; and indeed, I think, he gives more expression to his cantahile airs, and makes his hearers feel more, because he feels more himself, than any that I have feen in Italy. He indeed addresses himself to the heart, while most of the modern performers fing only to the fancy.

The first woman is Gabrieli; who is certainly the greatest singer in the world: and those, that sing on the same theatre with her, must be capital, otherwise they never can be attended to. This indeed has been the sate of all the other performers, except Pacherotti; and he too gave himself up for lost, on hearing her first performance.—It happened to be an air of execution, exactly adapted to

her

her voice, which she exerted in so extraordinary a manner, that before it was half done poor Pacherotti burst out a crying, and ran in behind the scenes; lamenting that he had dared to appear on the same stage with so wonderful a singer; where his small talents must not only be lost, but where he must ever be accused of a presumption, which he hoped was foreign to his character.

It was with some difficulty they could prevail on him to appear again, but from an applause well merited, both from his talents and his modesty, he soon began to pluck up a little courage; and in the singing of a tender air, addressed to Gabrieli in the character of a lover, even she herself, as well as the audience, is said to have been

moved.

Indeed, in these very pathetic pieces, I am furprifed that the power of the music does not sometimes altogether overcome the delufion of character; for when you are master of the language, and allow the united power of the poetry, the action, and the music, to have its full force on the mind, the effect is wonderfully great. However, I have never heard that this happened completely but once; and it was no less a singer than Farinelli that produced it.—He appeared in the character of a young captive hero, and in a tender air was foliciting mercy for his mistress and himself, of a stern and cruel tyrant who had made them his prisoners. The person that acted the tyrant was fo perfectly overcome by the melting-frains of Farinelli, that instead of refusing his request as he ought to have done, he entirely forgot his character, burst into tears, and caught him in his arms.

The performance of Gabrieli is so generally known and admired, that it is needless to say any thing to you on that subject. Her wonderful execution

execution and volubility of voice have long been the admiration of Italy, and has even obliged them to invent a new term to express it; and would she exert herfelf as much to please as to astonish, she might almost perform the wonders that have been afcribed to Orpheus and Timotheus; but it happens, luckily perhaps for the repose of mankind, that her caprice is, if possible, even greater than her talents, and has made her still more contemptible than these have made her celebrated. By this means, her character has often proved a fufficent antidote, both to the charms of her voice and those of her person, which are indeed almost equally powerful; but if these had been united to the qualities of a modest and an amiable mind, the must have made dread havock in the world. However, with all her faults, the is certainly the most dangerous fyren of modern times, and has made more conquests, I suppose; than any one woman breathing.

It is but justice to add, that contrary to the generality of her profession, she is by no means selfish or mercenary; but on the contrary, has given many singular proofs of generosity and disinterestedness. She is very rich;—from the bounty, as is supposed, of the last emperor, who was fond of having her at Vienna; but she was at last banished that city, as she has likewise been most of those in Italy, from the broils and squabbles that her intriguing spirit, perhaps still more than her beauty, had excited. There are a great many anecdotes concerning her, that would not make an unentertaining volume, and I am told,

either are, or will foon be published.

Altho' she is considerably upwards of thirty, on the stage she scarcely appears to be eighteen; and the art of appearing young, is none of the most contemptible that she possesses.—When she is in good humour, and really chooses to ex-

ert herself, there is nothing in musick that I have ever heard, to be compared to her performance; for she sings to the heart as well as the fancy, when she pleases; and she then commands every passion with unbounded sway.—But she is seldom capable of exercising these wonderful powers; and her caprice and her talents exerting themselves by turns, have given her, all her life, the singular sate of becoming alternately an object

of admiration and of contempt.'

Her powers in acting and reciting, are scarcely inserior to those of her singing; sometimes, a sew words in the recitative, with a single accompaniment only, produces an effect, that I have never been sensible of from any other performer; and inclines me to believe that Rousseau advances on this branch of music, which with us is so much despised. She owes much of her merit to the instruction she received from Metestasio, particularly in acting and reciting; and he allows that she does more justice to his operas than any one other actress that ever attempted them.

Her caprice is so fixed and so stubborn, that neither interest, nor flattery, nor threats, nor punishments, have the least power over it; and it appears, that treating her with respect or contempt, have an equal tendency to increase it.

It is seldom that she condescends to exert these wonderful talents; but most particularly if she imagines that such an exertion is expected. And instead of singing her airs as other actresses do, for the most part she only hums them over, a mazza voce. And no art whatever is capable of making her sing when she does not choose it.

The most successful expedient has ever been found, to prevail on her favourite lover, for she always has one, to place himself in the centre of the pit, or the front box; and if they are on good terms, which is seldom the case, she will address

address her tender airs to him, and exert herself to the utmost.—Her present inamorato promised to give us this specimen of his power over her; he took his place accordingly; but Gabrieli, probably suspecting the contrivance, would take no notice of him; so that even this expedient does

not always fuecced.

The viceroy, who is fond of music, has tried every method with her to no purpose. Sometime ago he gave a great dinner to the principal nobility of Palermo, and sent an invitation to Gabrieli to be of the party. Every other person arrived at the hour of invitation. The viceroy ordered dinner to be kept back, and sent to let her know that the company waited her. The messenger found her reading in bed;—she said she was forry for having made the company wait, and begged he would make her apology, but that really she had entirely forgot her engagement.

The viceroy would have forgiving this piece of infolence, but when the company came to the opera, Gabrieli repeated her part with the most persect negligence and indifference, and sung all her airs in what they call sotto voce, that is, so low that they can scarcely be heard. The viceroy was offended; but as he is a good tempered man, he was loath to make use of authority; but at last, by a perseverance in this insolent stubbornness, she obliged him to threaten her with punishment in case she any longer resused to

fing.

On this she grew more obstinate than ever, declaring that force and authority should never succeed with her; that he might make her cry, but that he never could make her sing. The viceroy then sent her to prison, where she remained twelve days. During which time, she gave magnificent entertainments every day, paid the

the debts of all the poor prisoners, and distributed large sums in charity. The viceroy was obliged to give up struggling with her, and she was at last set at liberty amidst the acclamations of the poor.—Luckily for us, she is at present in good humour, and sometimes exerts herself

to the utmost of her power.

She fays she has several times been on terms with the managers of our opera, but thinks she shall never be able to pluck up resolution enough to go to England. What do you think is her. reason?—It is by no means a bad one. She fav's, the cannot command her caprice; but for the most part, that it commands her; and that there she could have no opportunity of indulging it:---For, fays she, were I to take it in my head not to fing, I am told the people there would certainly mob me, and perhaps break my bones; now I like to fleep in a found skin, although it fhould even be in a prison.—She alledges too that it is not always caprice that prevents her from finging; but that it often depends upon physical causes; and this indeed I can readily believe: for that wonderful flexibility of voice that runs with fuch rapidity and neatness through the most minute visions, and produces almost instantaneously fo great a variety of modulation, must furely depend on the very nicest tone of the fibres. And if these are in the smallest degree relaxed, or their elasticity diminished, how is it possible that their contractions and expansions can fo readily obey the will, as to produce these effects?—The opening of the glottis which forms the voice is extremely fmall, and in every variety of tone, its diameter must suffer a sensible change; for the fame diameter must ever produce the fame tone: -So wonderfully minute are its contractions and dilations that Dr. Keil, I think, computes, that in some voices, its opening, not more than the tenth of an inch, is divided into upwards of 1200 parts, the different sound of every one of which is perceptible to an exact ear. Now, what a nice tension of sibres must this require!—I should imagine every the most minute change in the air, must cause a sensible difference, and that in our foggy climate the sibres would be in danger of losing this wonderful sensibility; or at least, that they would very often be put out of tune. It is not the same case with an ordinary voice; where the variety of divisions run through, and the volubility with which they are executed, bear no proportion to those of Gabrieli.

One of the ballets of our opera, is a representation of Vauxhall gardens, and this is the third time I have feen Vauxhall brought upon the Italian theatre; at Turin, at Naples, and here. The gardens are well represented, and the idea must have been given by some person that had been on the fpot. A variety of good English figures are brought in: fome with large frizzled wigs sticking half a yard out behind their necks; fome with little cut fcratches, that look extremely ridiculous. Some come in cracking their whips, with buckskin breeches and jockey caps. Some are armed with great oaken slicks; their hair tied up in enormous clubs, and flocks that swell their necks to double its natural fize. But what affords the principal part of the entertainment is, three quakers who are duped by three ladies of the town, in concert with three jack-tars, their lovers .- These characters, as you may believe, are much exaggerated, though upon the whole, they are supported with humour, and have afforded us a good deal of laughing; however, we were hurt to fee the respectable character of quakers turned into fuch ridicule; and as the people here were altogether unacquainted with

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it, we have been at some pains to explain to them the simplicity and purity of their manners, and the incorruptible integrity of their principles.

Although the Sicilians in general are a good fort of people, and feem to be endowed with a large share of philanthropy and urbanity; yet it must be owned they have no great affection for their neighbours on the continent; and indeed the dislike is altogether reciprocal.—It is fomewhat fingular, I am afraid not much for the honour of hu. man nature, that through all Europe, the two neighbouring nations have a perpetual jarring with each other. I could heartily wish that we had been an exception from this rule; but am forry to fee, from our news-papers, which are fent to the nobility of this city, that at present we are rather the most distinguished for it; at least our animosities, if there really are any, make by much the greatest noise of all.—We have often been asked by foreigners what was the ground of the mighty quarrel, that fuch torrents of the most illiberal abuse have been poured out by a people so celebrated for liberality of fentiment; and it is with difficulty we can perfuade them, that although from the papers this fometimes appears to be the voice of the nation, yet in fact, it is only confined to a fet of the most worthless and despicable incendiaries; like him who fet the house in a flame, on purpose to pilfer during the conflagration .-But the abuse that is levelled at the king, surprifes them more than all the rest; and you cannot conceive their amazement and indignation when we assured them, that notwithstanding all this, he was the most virtuous and benevolent, prince on earth.—Then exclaimed a Sicilian nobleman, you must certainly be the most damnable people on the globe.—I was a good deal flruck with the fuddenness of the charge; and it was not without many explanations

explanations of the liberty of our constitution, and particularly that of the prefs, that I could prevail with him to retract his fentiments; and think more favourably of us.—Still he infifted, that so egregious an abuse of this liberty was only a farther proof of his position, and that there must be something effentially wrong, in a nation that could allow of fuch abuse levelled at the most sacred of all characters, the highest virtue united to the highest station. We assured him, that what he heard; was only the voice of the most abandoned and profligate wretches in the nation, who, taking advantage of the freedom of the prefs, had often made thefe news-papers the vehicles of the most detestable sedition. That both the king and queen were beloved by all their subjects, at least by all those of worth; -that they never were spoken of, but as the most perfect model of conjugal union and happinefs, as well as of every focial endowment; and that they could have no enemies, but the enemies of virtue.

However, after all, we could but patch up a peace with him. He could not comprehend (he faid) how the voice of a few incendiaries should be louder than the general voice of the nation.—We told him, that people who were pleased commonly held their tongue; and that sedition and libel ever made a greater noise than panegyric; just as the fire-bell is rung louder, and is more listened to than the bell for rejoicing.

Adieu. Our pilot fays the wind is not fair, for that possibly we may still stay a day or two longer.

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Palermo, July 29th.

WERE I to enter upon the natural history of this island, it would lead me into a vast field of speculation, for which I have neither time nor abilities: However, a variety of objects struck us as we travelled along, that it may not be amis to give you some little account of .- There are a variety of mineral waters, almost through the whole of Sicily. Many of these are boiling hot; others, still more fingular, are of a degree of cold fuperior to that of ice, and yet never freeze.

In feveral places, they have fountains that throw up a kind of oil on their furface, which is of great use to the peafants, who burn it in their lamps, and use it to many other purposes; but there is still a more remarkable one near Nicosia, which is called il fonte Candlotto. It is covered with a thick foum of a kind of pitch, which amongst the country people is effeemed a fovereign remedy in

rheumatic, and many other complaints.

The water of a small lake near Naso is celebrated for dying black every thing that is put into it; and this it is faid to perform without the mixture of any other ingredient, although the water itself

is remarkably pure and transparent.

They have a variety of fulphureous baths, like those near Naples, where the patient is thrown into a profuse sweat, only from the heat of the vapour. The most celebrated are those of Siaccia, and on the mountain of St. Cologero; not in the neighbourhood

hood of Ætna, as I expected, but at a great distance from that mountain. But indeed I am much inclined to believe, that not only mount Ætna, but the greatest part of Sicily, and almost the whole of the circumjacent islands, have been originally formed by fubierraneous fire; but I shall have an opportunity of speaking more largely on this subject, when I give you an account of the country round Naples.

I have observed lava, pumice, and tufa in many parts of Sicily, at a great distance from Ætna; and there are a variety both of mountains and valleys that still emit a hot vapour, and produce springs

of boiling water.

About a mile and a half to the west of this city, at a small beach where we often go a swiming, there are many fprings of warm water, that rife even within the fea, at the depth of five or fix feet. We were at first a good deal surprised to find ourselves almost instantaneously both in the hot and cold bath; for at one stroke we commonly passed through the hot water, which only extends for a few feet around the spring. It gave us a momentary glow, and produced a very odd, uncouth fenfation by no means an agreeable one. I mentioned this fingularity to feveral gentlemen here, who tell me they have observed the same thing.

Not a great way from this is a celebrated fountain, called Il Mar Dolce, where there are some remains of an ancient naumachia; and in the mountain above it, they shew you a cavern, where a gigantic skeleton is said to have been found: however, it fell to dust when they attempted to remove it.-Fazzello fays, its teeth were the only part that refifted the impression of the air; that he procured two of them, and that they weighed near two ounces. There are many fuch flories to be met with in the Sicilian legends, as it feems to

be an univerfal belief, that this island was once inhabited by giants; but although we have made diligent enquiry, we have never yet been able toprocure a fight of any of these gigantic bones which are faid to be still preserved in many parts of the island. Had there been any foundation for this, I think it is probable, they must have found their way into some of the museums; but this is not the case; nor indeed have we met with any person of sense and credibility that could say they had feen any of them. We had been affured at Naples, that an entire skeleton, upwards of ten feet high, was preserved in the museum of Palermo; but there is no such thing there, nor I believe any where else in the island. -This museum is well furnished both with antiques and articles of natural history, but is not superior to what we have seen in many other places.

The number of fouls in Palermo are computed at about 150,000. Those of the whole island, by the last numeration, amounted to 1,123,163; of which number there are about 56,000 that belong to the different monasteries and religious orders. The number of houses are computed at 268,120, which makes betwixt five and fix to a

house.

The great standing commodity of Sicily, which has ever constituted the riches of the island, was their crops of wheat; but they cultivate many other branches of commerce, though none that could bear any proportion to this, were it under a free government, and exportation allowed .-Their method of preserving their grain will appear somewhat singular to our farmers; instead of exposing it, as we do, to the open air, they are at the greatest pains to exclude it entirely from it. In many places, where the foil is dry, particularly near Agrigentum, they have dug large pits

pits or caverns in the rock. These open by a small hole at top, and swell to a great width below; here they pour down their grain, after it has been made exceedingly dry; and ramming it hard, they cover up the hole, to protect it from rain; and they assure us it will preserve in this man-

ner for many years.

The Soda is a plant that is much cultivated. and turns out to a confiderable account. This is the vegetable, that by the action of fire, is afterwards converted into mirrors and cryftals. Great quantities of it are fent every year to supply the glass-houses at Venice. They have likewise a confiderable trade in licorice, rice, figs, raifins, and currants, the best of which grow amongst the extinguished vulcanoes of the Lipari Islands. Their honey is, I think, the highest flavoured I have ever feen; in some parts of the island even fuperior to that of Minorca; this is owing, no doubt, to the quantity of aromatic plants, with which this beautiful country is every where overfpread. This honey is gathered three months in the year; July, August, and October. It is found by the peafants in the hollow of trees and rocks; and is esteemed of a superior quality to that produced under the tyranny of man.-The country of the Lesser Hybla is still, as formerly, the part of the island that is most celebrated for honey. The Count Statela made us a present of fome of it, gathered on his brother the Prince of Spaceaforno's effate, which lies near the ruins of that city.

Sugar is now no article of the Sicilian commerce, though a finall quantity of it is still manufactured for home confumption; but the plantations of the fugar cane, I am told, thrive well in

feveral parts of the island.

The juice of licorice is prepared both here and in Calabria, and is fent to the northern countries of Europe, where it is used for colds.—

The juice is squeezed out of the roots; after which it is boiled to a consistency, and formed into cakes, which are packed up with bay-leaves in the same order that we receive them.

In some of the northern parts of the island, am told, they find the shell-fish that produces a kind of slax, of which gloves and slockings are made; but these too are found in greater quanti-

ties in Calabria.

Their plantations of oranges, lemons, bergamots, almonds, &c. produce no inconfiderable branch of commerce. The pistachio nut too is much cultivated in many parts of the island, and with great fuccess. These trees, like many others, are male and female: the male is called Scornobecco, and is always barren; but unless a quantity of these are mixed in every plantation, the pistachio-tree never bears a nut.—But of all the variety that is cultivated in Sicily, the manna tree is esteemed the most profitable; it resembles the ash, and is I believe of that species. About the beginning of August, during the season of the greatest heat, they make an incision in the bark, near the root of the tree; a thick whitish liquor is immediately discharged from the wound, which foon hardens in the fun; when it is carefully taken off and gathered into boxes. They renew these incisions every day during the season, obferving, however, only to wound one fide of the tree; the other fide they referve for the fummer following.

The cantharides fly is a Sicilian commodity; it is found on several trees of Ætna, whose juice is supposed to have a corrosive or abstersive qua-

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lity, particularly the pine and the fig-tree; and I am told the cantharides of Mount Ætna are rec-

koned preserable to those of Spain.

The marbles of Sicily would afford a great fource of opulence, were there any encouragement to work the quarries: of these they have an infinite variety, and of the finest sorts. I have seen some of them little inserior to the giall and verd antique, that is now so precious. The beautiful yellow columns you must have observed in the royal chapel of Casserto are of the first kind. They have likewise some that very much resemble

lapis lazuli and porphyry.

At Centorbi they find a kind of foft stone that dissolves in water, and is used in washing instead of foap, from which property it is called Pietra Saponaro. They likewise find here, as well as in Calabria, the celebrated stone, which, upon being watered and exposed to a pretty violent degree of heat, produces a plentiful crop of mushrooms:-But it would be endless to give you an account of all the various commodities and curious productions of this island; Ætna alone affords a greater number than many of the most extensive kingdoms, and is no less an epitome of the whole earth in its foil and climate, than in the variety of its productions.—Besides the corn, the wine, the oil, the filk, the spice, and delicious fruits of its lower region; the beautiful forests, the flocks, the game, the tar, the cork, the honey, of its fecond; the fnow and ice of its third; it affords from its caverns a variety of mineral and other productions; cinnabar, mercury, fulphur, alum, nitre, and vitriol; fo that this wonderful mountain at the fame time produces every necessary, and every luxury of life.

Its first region covers their tables with all the delicacies that the earth produces; its second supplies them with game, cheese, butter, honey; and

not only furnishes wood of every kind for building their ships and houses, but likewise an inexhaustible store of excellent fewel; and as the third region. with its ice and fnow, keeps them fresh and cool during the heat of fummer, fo this contributes equally to keep them warm and comfortable during the cold winter.

Thus, you see, the variety of climate is not confined to Ætna itself; but, in obedience to the voice of man, descends from that mountain, and, mingling the violence of their extremes, diffuses the most benign influences all over the island, tempering each other to moderation, and foftening the ri-

gours of every feafon.

We are not then to be surprized at the obstinate attachment of the people to this mountain, and that all its terrors have not been able to drive them away from him: for although he fometimes chaftifes; yet like an indulgent parent, he mixes fuch bleffings along with his chaffifements, that their affections can never be estranged; for at the same time that he threatens with a rod of iron, he pours down upon them all the bleffings of the age of gold.

Adieu-We are now going to pay our respects to the viceroy, and make our farewel vifits.-This ceremony never fails to throw a damp on my fpirits; but I have feldom found it fo strong as at present, there being little or no probability that we shall ever have it in our power to make any return for the many civilities we have received from them.

Farewel. The wind we are told is fair, and I shall probably be the bearer of this to the continent, from whence you may foon expect to hear from,

&c.

LETTER XXXVIII.

Naples, August 1st.

AFTER two days delightful failing, we have again arrived in this city; where, to our infinite joy, we have found all the worthy friends we had left behind us. This indeed was necessary, to wipe out the impressions which the leaving of Sicily had occasioned. We shall still remain here, at least for three months, till the season of the Mal Aria is entirely over. You know the danger of travelling through the Campania during that season, which although it is looked upon by many of our learned doctors as a vulgar error, yet we shall certainly

not submit ourselves to the experiment.

We propose to pass the winter at Rome, where we shall probably find occupation enough for four or five months.-From thence by Loretto, Bologna, &c. to Venice; the old beaten track. We shall then leave the parched fields of Italy, for the delightful cool mountains of Switzerland; -where liberty and fimplicity, long fince banished from polished nations, still flourish in their original purity; where the temperature and moderation of the climate, and that of the inhabitants, are mutually emblematical of each other. -- For whilst other nations are fcorched by the heat of the fun, and the still more scorching heats of tyranny and superstition; here the genial breezes for ever fan the air, and heighten that alacrity and joy which liberality and innocence alone can inspire; -here the genial flow of the foul has never yet been check'd by the idle and useless refinements of arts; but open and expands itself to all the calls of affections and benevolence.-

nevolence.—But I must stop. You know my old attachment to that primitive country.—It never sails to run away with me. We propose then, to make this the scene of our summer pleasures; and that by that time, I can foresee, we shall be heartily tired of Art, and shall begin again to languish after Nature. It is she alone that can give any real or lasting pleasure, and in all our pursuits of happiness, if she is not our guide, we never can attain our end.

Adieu, my dear friend. You have been our faithful companion during this Tour; and have not contributed a little to its pleasure. If it has afforded equal entertainment to you, we shall beg of you still to accompany us through the rest of our travels. A man must have a miserable imagination indeed, that can be in folitude, whilft he has fuch friends to converse with; the consideration of it foon removes the mountains and feas that separate us, and produces these sympathetic feelings, which are the only equivalent for the real absence of a friend; for I never sit down to write, but I fee you placed on the opposite fide of the table, and suppose that we are just talking over the transactions of the day. And without your presence to animate me, how is it possible that I could have patience to write these enormous epiftles?—Adieu. We are foon going to make some excursions through the kingdom of Naples; and if they produce any thing worthy of your observation, we must beg that you will still submit to be one of the party.

I ever am,

Most fincerely and affectionately; your's,

PAT. BRYDONE.

FINIS.

ATTEM OF TINOTE

serolence. -But I must stop. For know the other enviolent and that primitive confusy, 4-14 house to the property of the propert stimist of that some restrict test I don't reall be been for trep of the faut that begat as immediate at 244 11-41 The little say, and an accommission of the latest and and accommission of the latest accom to the transfer of the second And the state of t endowed adding morning was bound and bush on in AND THE SECOND CONTRACTOR OF THE SECOND CONTRA 160 The Bridge Co. " Service of Allegande Co. statically a consideration of the state of t Optimod Strain William Strain AND SERVICE PROPERTY AND AND ASSESSMENT OF THE PARTY OF T A Call of the Man Man Man All Control